

Thursday February 8 1996

Table of international flight routes and times, including destinations like Abu Dhabi, Athens, and London.

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Excalibur revealed

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Derek Malcolm on the week's films

Harvey Keitel in Spike Lee's Clockers

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Welfare spending slashed

David Brindle, Social Services Correspondent

THE cost of running Britain's social security system is to be slashed by at least a quarter in the most draconian cuts programme seen in the nation's public services, it emerged last night.

Tens of thousands of jobs are at risk and there will be fundamental changes in the way people claim and receive welfare benefits, largely unchanged since the start of the welfare state.

One plan said to be under consideration is a system whereby the state would pass to claimants to prove their entitlement to benefits. If they could not, they would be refused money.

Jim Boyd, a leader of the biggest Civil Service union, said the Tories are operating a scorched earth policy against the poor and vulnerable people they have failed to help.

The plan to strip a minimum 25 per cent from the Department of Social Security's running costs budget, currently £3.25 billion, has come in a letter to staff from Ann Bowtell, the department's permanent secretary. She says the cuts must be made over the next two to three years.

The letter was made public 24 hours after Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, made a strong defence of the welfare state and warned that sudden "reforms" could trigger social disruption of the kind seen recently in riots on the streets of Paris.

In a lecture yesterday, Peter Lilley, Social Security Secretary, said that he was pursuing a gradual programme of sector-by-sector reforms and that he endorsed Mr Clarke's comments about the dangers of sudden change.

The planned running-costs cuts appear to correspond to demands made by the Treasury in last autumn's spending round. In leaked correspondence with William Waldegrave, then Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Mr Lilley said: "Your proposed settlement on running costs fills me with despair. The impact on operations will be devastating." He went on:

Now... "To keep within budgets and cope with rising workloads, we need to find business efficiencies of at least a quarter by 1998/99."

— Ann Bowtell, Permanent Secretary DSS, February 1 1996

... and then

"Your proposed settlement on running costs fills me with despair. The impact on operations will be devastating."

— Peter Lilley in leaked letter to William Waldegrave, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, October 1995, warning of the danger of cuts.

"Quite apart from the political fall-out as service becomes more chaotic, I am convinced — for reasons I've explained — that we would be cutting off our noses to spite our faces."

It seems that Mr Lilley merely bought time in his negotiations with the Treasury.

The cuts programme is expected to deliver relatively few savings next year, 1996-97, but to accelerate sharply thereafter.

Mrs Bowtell says in her letter that as the single largest spending department in Whitehall, the DSS has a big part to play in controlling costs. "To keep within budget and cope with rising workloads, we need to find business efficiencies of at least a quarter by 1998/99."

A running costs review has been taking "a fundamental look at how we could deliver our business at lower cost while maintaining high standards."

Mrs Bowtell says greater use will need to be made of computer technology. "We also need to deliver services through purchaser/provider arrangements which pay for results, not procedures. This will involve both DSS staff and the private sector."

Union leaders have seized on this as proof there will be wholesale privatisation of the department's computer systems, already substantially contracted out.

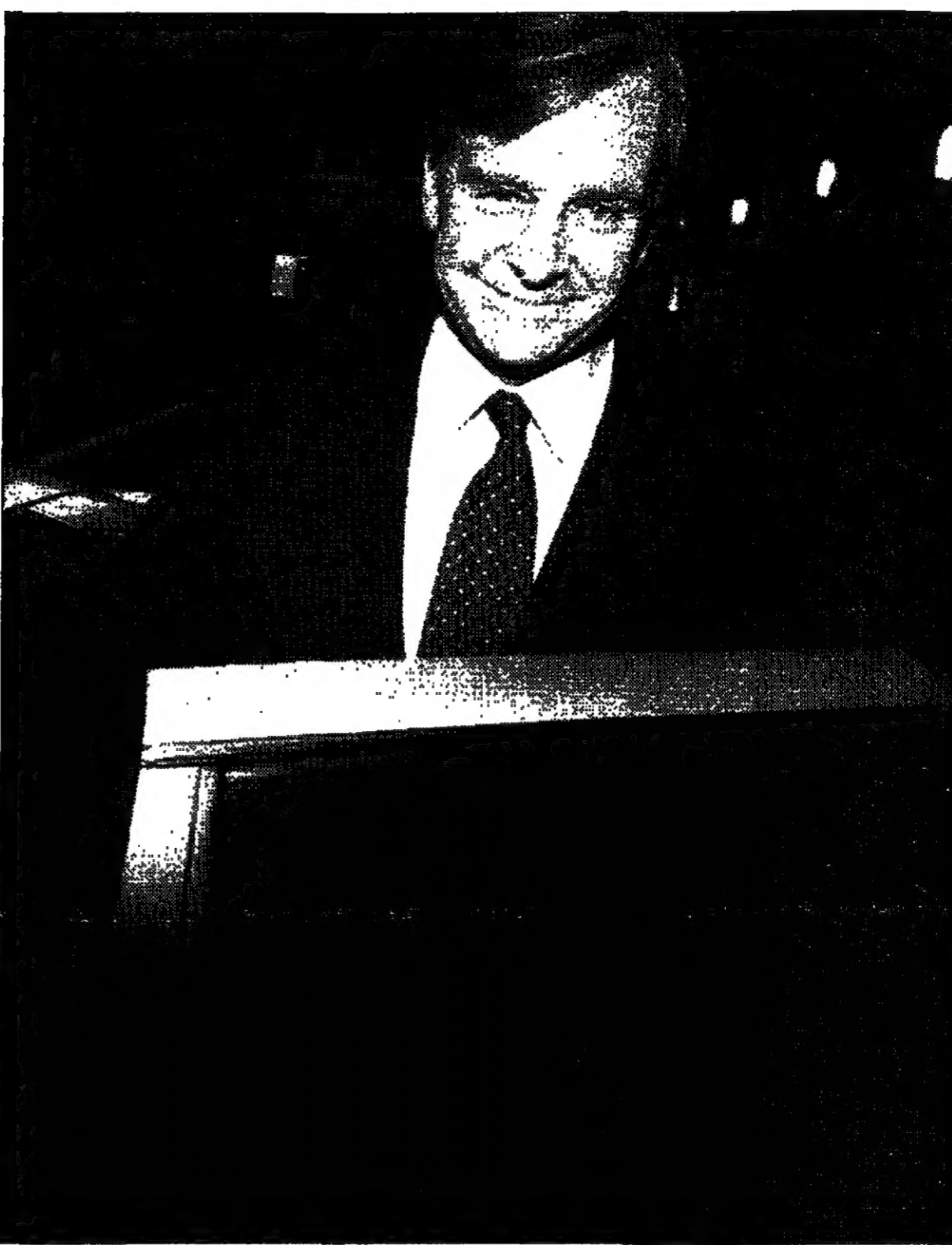
They also expect large-scale redundancies among the department's 80,000 staff and a shift to self-assessment by benefit claimants along lines being implemented for taxpayers by the Inland Revenue. The unions claim they have seen discussion documents suggesting benefit be withheld from any claimant unable to prove entitlement.

Mr Boyd, social security group president of the Public Services, Tax and Commerce Union, said: "The Government wants to treat all claimants like bogus asylum-seekers: if you cannot prove your entitlement, you will be written-off."

One obstacle to such a change would be a need for it to be effected by legislation. Mr Lilley is said to have an open mind on this, despite the Government's wafer-thin majority.

A DSS spokeswoman described as speculation the unions' warning of widespread job losses, insisting that the department remained intent on avoiding compulsory redundancies where possible. Suggestions of radical change in the claiming process were also speculation, she said.

Judge dismisses criticisms of arms-to-Iraq inquiry as 'ludicrous'



Sir Richard Scott arriving at the inquiry headquarters in Victoria, central London, yesterday

Scott goes on the attack

Richard Norton-Taylor and Michael White

SIR Richard Scott last night went on the offensive in the face of an orchestrated attack on his forthcoming report on the arms-to-Iraq scandal, describing some of the criticisms levelled at him by former cabinet ministers as "ludicrous".

As the Government came under intense pressure to back down over arrangements for the publication of the judge's report, Sir Richard dismissed claims by Lord Howe and Douglas Hurd — two former foreign secretaries — that his procedures were unfair and that witnesses were subjected to aggressive questioning.

He told BBC's Newsnight it was "ludicrous to suppose the questioning was aggressive". He said witnesses had legal help and advance notice of the questions they were to be asked, and had had the chance to respond to any proposed criticisms of their conduct.

If their lawyers had been allowed to cross-examine every other witness, as Lord Howe was demanding, the inquiry would never have finished its work, he said. "We'd still be there. It would have been ludicrous."

"It would have been a circus both in the Roman sense and in the Bertram Mills sense."

The Speaker of the Commons, Betty Boothroyd, put her weight behind demands that MPs should be able to read Sir Richard's conclusions before ministers put their own gloss on it. Labour is furious that the report will be available to its frontbench spokesmen only 30 minutes.

Turn to page 4, column 7

Leader comment, page 8; Waiting in silence, page 9

200 feared dead after illegal flight crashes

Jan Traynor in Bonn and Keith Harper

ALMOST 200 people, mostly German tourists, were believed dead last night in the shark-infested waters of the Caribbean after an illegal flight by a chartered Boeing 757 crashed just off the Dominican Republic.

The German authorities said the Boeing, chartered by the Alas Nacionales airline, had no licence to fly to Berlin and Frankfurt, its destinations, and had no landing permission. Early reports said the plane was not insured and was unclear last night.

"The plane was not permitted to fly to Germany," said Volker Matern of the German transport ministry. "Before it flies, the airline must contact the air authorities in the target country and Alas Nacionales did not do that."

Alas sub-chartered the plane at the last minute from the Turkish airline Birgenair, after the Boeing 757's passengers were meant to return on developed an hydraulic pump fault. Birgenair operates closely with the Hamburg-based Oger Tours, the biggest seller in Germany of holidays in Turkey.

A German transport ministry spokesman said that the 757 had flying permission for Germany, but the replacement did not.

The fact that the plane took off without permission looked



likely to trigger an anguished debate over budget tour operators.

Rolf Rehberg of the pilots' association, Cockpit, said last night there were many questions to be asked about Birgenair's Caribbean operation.

There were no known survivors among the 176 passengers and 13 crew. About 80 corpses were recovered by rescue teams, led by the United States coastguard from Miami, but the German foreign ministry said it did not expect any survivors, and the presence of sharks in the area, near the notorious Bermuda Triangle, was hindering the rescue effort.

The Boeing disappeared within three minutes of take-off from the republic's Puerto

Irish 'Dayton' rejected

David Sharrock and Michael White

ANGLO-IRISH relations plunged deep into crisis last night when the British Government rejected Dublin's proposals for a Bosnia-style international conference on Northern Ireland.

Irish officials accused Downing Street of lacking the will to honour a commitment to reaching all-party talks within the next three weeks.

In Washington today the Irish foreign minister, Dick Spring, will attempt to bring US pressure to bear on Downing Street by enlisting President Clinton's support for the two-day 'Dayton-style' talks, which he suggests could be held in Belfast.

Unionist reaction was hostile, denouncing the proposal as a ploy to allow nationalists

and Sinn Fein to duck the challenge of an elective body. The Northern Ireland minister, Michael Ancram, described the proposal as "at best, premature."

He added: "We have never believed that there is any purpose in moving forward unless there is a good chance of that move succeeding."

This prompted some Dublin sources to claim that Downing Street's idea of a peace process meant moving only at a pace chosen by the Uist Unionist leader, David Trimble. And they shrugged off claims that the timing of Mr Spring's announcement was a stunt timed to coincide with his Washington trip.

In a mood of growing desperation, one source alleged that the Northern Ireland Secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew, "didn't want to know" about Mr Spring's idea, but that the

alternative to not publicising it would have been to admit that both sides are once more in deadlock.

Earlier Mr Spring, speaking at the conclusion of an Anglo-Irish meeting in Dublin, said his plan for a conference similar to that held in Dayton, Ohio, last year to end the Bosnia war was "a central way to proceed."

It would bring together, on a voluntary basis, all the parties and the two governments for two days on a "proximity basis" which would leave participants free to decide with whom they wished to enter discussions.

The ground to be covered by the conference would include last month's Mitchell report on decommissioning of paramilitary weapons, and whether or how elections could play a part in such negotiations.

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Advertisement for Alliance Leicestershire, including contact information and a coupon.

Large advertisement for Alliance Leicestershire, featuring a coupon and contact details.

Sketch

Nicely nasty in the British way



Simon Hoggart

THE Civil Service faces a few unpleasant surprises with the publication of the Scott Report next week...

ally flawed". Did he agree? Sir Robin: "I have made no public criticism of the procedures of the inquiry...

Labour leader pledges elected mayors and devolution for Scotland and Wales in constitutional shake-up

Hereditary peers 'face axe'



Kings and their bastard kin... Clockwise from top, Charles II and William IV, and Charles II's illegitimate descendants...

Blair refuses to back PR reform

Patrick Wintour Chief Political Correspondent

TONY BLAIR yesterday issued a stinging attack on the hereditary peerage system, saying British democracy could not tolerate an upper chamber of Parliament...

ent histories". The Welsh Office was a recent creation and there was very little separate Welsh legislation...

Reconstitution

- LABOUR'S constitutional reform plans:
Introduce tax raising parliament for Scotland and assembly for Wales with no tax raising powers...

First night

Gawky guy who found his balls

Robert Yates

PEOPLE over-analyse much of the comedy according to Lee Evans in his case, the reason for performing was straight forward...

merely the channel for a gang of people having an argument. "I'm all over the shop," he says at one stage...

From the wrong side of the blanket

Owen Bowcott on chequered routes to a place on the red leather benches

Absentee legislators

EVEN among the Lords' unelected ranks of hereditary privilege, one clutch of peers is conspicuous in owing its good fortune to anything but public service...

In the last parliamentary session, between November 1994 and November 1995, 357 hereditary peers attended on fewer than half of the 142 parliamentary days...

title lives near Chichester and has been a chancellor of Sussex University. The Earl of Munster owes his coronet to the good looks and charm of the 18th century comic actress, Mrs Jordan...

known to history as Nell. His descendant glories in the title of Hereditary Grand Falconer of England but holds no other public office...

Let pupils study pop culture, but don't Blur the distinctions, says curriculum adviser

Barbie Dutler

SCHOOLCHILDREN should be taught the superiority of Schubert over their more likely choice of Britpop idols like Blur...

example of a prevailing "cultural relativism" which failed to recognise enduring artistic values, Nick Tate, chief executive of the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority, said...

latest Blur release, between Milton and Mills and Boon, or between Vermeer's View of Delft and a brick wall or dead sheep at the Tate...

from his boss, Sir Ron Dearing, chairman of the School Curriculum and Advisory Authority...

gauge and Communication at Oxford University, who this week outlined her permissive views on spoken English in the BBC Reith Lectures...

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Suits C...
Sally Weale...
A...
I'll see yo...
It was ea...
out of be...
kids to m...
bound to...
she was...



DRESSING UP: Ultra-formal style long out of favour



DRESSING DOWN: Ultra-casual fashion statement



DRESSING RIGHT: Return to office-orthodox

Suits oust scruffs in office fashion stakes

'Blazers, sports jackets, leather jackets and flannels are not acceptable...'
Sally Weale on the new conservatism

AFTER years of dressing down for work, the traditional shirt and tie are making a comeback in Britain's offices. Having experimented unsuccessfully with the American-pioneered casual business look, companies are increasingly introducing more conventional dress codes for staff. Among those affected are 53 workers at the North-East traffic area office in Leeds, it emerged yesterday, who have been told that trackuits, shorts and T-shirts are out. Shirts, ties and smart trousers are now the order of the day; women have been told to wear "the female equivalent". A circular to workers has advised that earrings are out for men, nose-rings are forbidden whatever your sex, and shirts should be neatly tucked into trousers. "There has been a growing tendency recently for some staff to adopt an overall standard of dress which, while tidy, is more casual than the general public have come to expect from office workers," the circular read. Clerical and secretarial staff at the office, which is responsible for the road safety of lorries and coaches in the North-east, are not happy and have taken the matter up with their trade union. Labour MP Gwyneth Dunwoody is to write in Parliament about what she has called a "barny" idea. "The trend towards more casual clothing in the workplace began in American com-



DRESSING SHARPLY: Body piercing is unacceptable

puter software houses where employees spent their days sitting in front of screens. It began with "dress-down Fridays" when staff were encouraged to wear casual clothing for just one day, then spread to the rest of the week. "It was a product of the nerd culture," says image consultant Mary Spillane. "The whole of America became Sloth Zone International. Then managers came over here saying 'we can be groovy here too,' and everyone was wearing jeans. "But it has had very mixed results in Britain. Most of the companies that had it are rescinding it. Everyone's sliding back into more traditional dress. It might be great for staff morale, but it's not good for business. Nevertheless, American companies in Britain such as IBM still endorse casual dress. "It's smart-casual really," says IBM's Anne Keogh, who was wearing polo-neck sweater, brown linen skirt and smart Jaeger jacket. "Jeans, garish T-shirts and trainers are not allowed, but almost anything else goes, including long hair and earrings for men. "It's whatever is appropriate for your customers. But 90 per cent of people still come in suits anyway." At Ford, likewise, there is little appetite for the unconventional. After the management let it be known last year that a more casual dress code was to be introduced, there was little if any detectable change in what Ford's 33,000

The ins and outs of office wear

- What's allowed:**
- Traditional M&S dark suit and tie—expected and often insisted on by many companies, especially City and law firms.
 - "Dress-down Fridays", imported to Britain by American companies, allows for more relaxed clothing as the weekend approaches, such as open-necked shirts and casual trousers, not ripped jeans, T-shirts and trainers.
 - Long hair for men—but only in the more liberal companies. Last month Norfolk ambulance man Paul Holden felt obliged to chop off his pony-tail in the face of managerial disapproval.
 - Alan Partridge-style sports-casual (notwithstanding objections on the grounds of bad taste). As long as it's smart, clean and conventional, it's acceptable.
- And what isn't:**
- Men in skirts—all right for the likes of Gantier and Galliano, but unacceptable in the office, as prison alcohol counsellor Bobi Elmes discovered when he turned up for work in a mini-skirt and was sacked.
 - Body piercing—for either men or women (at least not the bits that show). Men can probably get away with discreet earrings in more liberal companies, but nose studs are a definite no-no.
 - Traditional whites on the cricket pitch—first players went multi-coloured, now umpires like Dickie Bird and David Shepherd will be seen sporting lacman shirts and black coats.
 - Jeans, vests, Destroy T-shirts, shell-suits, Linford Christie-style cycling shorts and trainers.
 - Also unpopular—baggy shorts, Hawaiian shirts, bondage trousers and almost anything designed by Vivienne Westwood circa 1976.

Bigger white list tightens asylum rules

Alan Travis Home Affairs Editor

MICHAEL Howard is to shut the door on asylum seekers from three more countries by extending the current seven-strong official "white list" to include Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania. The disclosure that the Home Office wants to extend the current seven-strong white list of "safe countries" is contained in a "restricted" internal Foreign Office guidance document signed by the Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, which has been leaked to the Guardian. More than 3,425 asylum applications were received from the three countries last year. But only 59 applicants were given asylum or exceptional leave to remain. The document also shows that the Foreign Office did not give its immediate backing to the inclusion of India and Pakistan on the original list announced by the Home Secretary in the Commons last November. The Home Office last night refused to comment on a leaked document but said the white list was "designed to be flexible so countries could be added or subtracted according to the changing situation." A spokesman denied any disagreements with the Foreign Office but confirmed it was not unusual for discussions to take place between departments. The inclusion of a particular country in the white list means that asylum claims from its citizens are, according to the document, "likely to be successful." The leaked document makes clear that the key criterion for a country to be included in the white list is not its human rights record but the volume of asylum claims it generates and the rate at which the Home Office refuses them. The document shows that the Home Office proposed a 10-strong list of countries it wanted included on the initial white list. They were: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Ghana, Poland, Romania, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Pakistan and Tanzania. In the event, Mr Howard announced that thousands of asylum applications from seven of the 10 countries would be presumed to be bogus unless proved otherwise. But last night Amnesty International said it believed the leaked document confirmed the Home Office's ambition to extend the list to the other three countries as well. Amnesty's refugee officer, Richard Dunstan, said: "This shows that the Home Office has a clear intention to expand the white list once the current asylum bill is on the statute book to include countries where there are serious human rights concerns." The Home Office has paved the way for the inclusion of the three countries on the white list by introducing a visa requirement for Tanzania last month and by including all three in a new accelerated "short procedure" being used for claimants arriving at Gatwick airport. The inclusion of Kenya will cause particular concern. Last year Baroness Chalker, as Overseas Aid Minister, said there were "still grounds for concern" about the Moi regime. Amnesty says that torture and ill-treatment by the security forces are widespread.

I'll see you in court, duchess tells Bryan

Former confidant 'may sue' for share of multi-million-pound Budgie income

Gary Young and Christopher Hood in Los Angeles
THE Duchess of York promised yesterday to fight her former confidant, John Bryan, in court if he attempted to sue her for a share of the multi-million-pound US deal to market her cartoon character Budgie the helicopter. Mr Bryan, aged 40, who like the duchess faces severe financial difficulties, has instructed his lawyers in Frankfurt to examine details of the duchess's US agreements. He is reported to be demanding 10 per cent of the global earnings from the children's character, arguing that he was instrumental in turning it into a lucrative product. He is said to be claiming that the duchess promised him a third of all her earnings from Budgie's TV, film and publishing rights. Last night Mr Bryan's German lawyer, Armin Groepner, said that "purely theoretically" it was conceivable that Mr Bryan could sue the duchess in Germany. "As you know, under English law, you can't sue the royal house." However, a spokeswoman for the duchess said: "Her Royal Highness denies absolutely any agreement with Mr Bryan concerning the prospective income from her cartoon character Budgie. She will therefore defend vigorously any proceedings which Mr Bryan might choose to initiate on the subject." A source at the animation and merchandising company Sleepy Kids, which holds the world exclusive marketing rights for Budgie, said: "In 1992 the Duchess of York sold us the rights for Budgie for 15 years. "Mr Bryan was definitely heavily involved in the negotiations for the deal. But nowhere was he officially acknowledged and he is not named in the deal. The case would depend entirely on whatever contract he had with the duchess." Sources close to the duchess say Mr Bryan was paid when the original £2.5 million contract was signed with Sleepy Kids. But Mr Bryan has been reported as saying: "Half of

my staff were working for her and it was all coming out of my pocket. A lot of people were hired just for her. There were lawyers doing all her deal and administrators for charities and everything else—all on my buck." Mr Bryan's financial affairs are under strain after the collapse of his property company, Oceanics Deutschland. He set up the German company in 1990 at a time when interest rates were high and when property prices nosedived. It crashed last summer and his business partner, Alan Starkie, was arrested for an alleged \$90,000 fraud. Mr Bryan, a Texan, is reported to owe £6,414 to his solicitors, Penningtons, more than £3,000 in rent on a penthouse in Chelsea, and almost £2,000 in unpaid bills to British Telecom and British Gas. Last year American Express

sued him for failing to pay a £15,000 bill on his platinum card. Currently thought to be in Los Angeles, he leads something of a nomadic existence, but is often seen in Beverly Hills and Bel-Air. He sometimes stays at the five-star Peninsula Hotel in Beverly Hills, where rooms start at \$325 a night and rise to \$3,000, but has not visited recently. He also stays with friends in Bel-Air, an exclusive community which regards its neighbour Beverly Hills as rather flimsy. But although he was in residence recently, an acquaintance said Mr Bryan had left for destinations unknown. Meanwhile, the duchess has a £3 million overdraft with Courts bank and faces the prospect of being sued by her former friend, the socialite Lily Mahani.

Chunnel rail link firm faces inquiry in new sell-off blow

Rebecca Smithers and Keith Harper

THE Government-owned company planning the Channel Tunnel rail link is being investigated over alleged "improper processes", it was revealed yesterday. This latest setback to rail privatisation could further stall the progress of the long-delayed £6-billion line. The inquiry into the former British Rail subsidiary Union Railways, being carried out by its auditors Price Waterhouse, involves financial discrepancies in the company's internal buying procedures. Union Railways said only small sums were involved. However, sources indicated to the Guardian last night that "several hundred thousand pounds" were involved. It also emerged last night that Resurgence Railways has expressed interest in bidding for other railway franchises, particularly South East Rail, a London commuter line. The company was the Government's preferred bidder to run the Great Western route, but the bid fell when questions were raised about its suitability to run the passenger franchise. Its managing director, John Ansdell, was one of two directors of a double glazing company, which went bust eight months ago. The Transport Secretary, Sir George Young, had hoped to announce the private sector winner of the competition to build the Channel Tunnel link next week. The new operator will take over Union Railways and European Passenger Services, the British operator of the high-speed Eurostar trains. The Department of Transport said the inquiry was "unlikely" to affect the announcement.

It was early morning when they came to get her. She had just stumbled out of bed, heading for the kitchen, turning on the TV, calling out to the kids to make sure they were OK, and then the door bell rang. It was bound to worry her. It was too early for any normal visitor. And besides, she was always worrying. Anxiety just seemed to grow inside her.

G2 cover story

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UNIVERSITY EDUCATION AND TRAINING OPEN TO ALL ADULTS

The Scott report: key players in the spotlight...



John Major
Prime Minister: was Foreign Secretary and Chancellor when arms exports to Iraq were discussed in Whitehall. His role was given a paper which suggested that arms export policy to Iraq had been secretly relaxed. Was warned by former trade minister Alan Clark that machine tool companies had been given a 'nod and wink' to export to Iraq. When Matrix Churchill, was prosecuted by Customs for exporting to Iraq and the trial collapsed in 1982, Major, as PM, set up the Scott inquiry. Scott's likely verdicts gave inaccurate information to MPs about export policy towards Iraq. His defence: he was not told the details or did not remember.



William Waldegrave
Chief Secretary to the Treasury: was Foreign Office minister, 1988-90, responsible for relations with Iraq and liaison with MIA. Civil Service minister responsible for open government when he gave evidence to the inquiry. His role approved secret machine tool exports knowing, from MIA reports, they would be used to make arms. Scott's likely verdicts he misled MPs, but perhaps not "deliberately". Wrong in insisting at inquiry that policy to Iraq did not change. His defence: policy did not change - just interpretation of existing policy.



Nicholas Lyell
Attorney General: responsible for Whitehall lawyers who handled Matrix Churchill prosecution. His role advised ministers they had a duty to sign Public Interest Immunity (PII) certificates designed to withhold information in Government documents which would have helped the Matrix Churchill defence. Scott's likely verdicts: led to ensure that Michael Heseltine's doubts about signing PII were passed to MIA prosecution. Had a mistaken view of aspects of PII law. Generally mishandled prosecution. His defence: took high-level, independent, legal advice on PII law.



Sir Robin Butler
Social Security Secretary: was Trade and Industry Secretary, 1990-92, responsible for export licences. His role: signed PII certificates before the Orlicac and Matrix Churchill prosecutions, but believed the MIA prosecution would fail after hearing Paul Henderson, main Matrix Churchill defendant, was MIA informant. Scott's likely verdicts: should have been more rigorous about PII advice from Sir Nicholas, and should have paid more attention to the documents covered by certificates. Acted in good faith, if badly advised. Defences accepted advice from Sir Nicholas and officials in good faith.



Kenneth Clarke
Chancellor: was Home Secretary, 1992-95, then responsible for MIA as well as MIE. His role: signed two PII certificates for Matrix Churchill trial. Claimed at inquiry that innocent lives would be at risk if evidence covered by PII was disclosed. Said he would resign if inquiry found him at fault. Scott's likely verdicts: acted in good faith, but adopted a too casual and inconsistent approach towards PII. His defence: his views on PII had no effect on the trial. Acted in good faith.



Nicholas Ridley
Foreign Secretary: Defence Secretary, 1992-95. His role: signed a PII certificate before Matrix Churchill trial. Conceded at the inquiry that certificates were presented to ministers in "standard form, even though they were drawn up to imply they were the result of a minister's personal value judgement." Scott's likely verdicts: Acted in good faith, on bad advice. His defence: Acted in good faith, though PII law should be changed.



John Gummer
Deputy Prime Minister: was Trade and Industry Secretary, 1992-95, taking over from Lilley. His role: reluctantly signed PII certificate after originally refusing. Warned it would look as though he was engaged in a "cover up". Said "no national interest" would think the documents should not be released. Undermined Sir Nicholas Lyell at the inquiry. Scott's likely verdicts: Failed for questioning advice about PII claims and pointing out failures in the way PII certificates are handed to ministers by Whitehall lawyers at short notice. His defence: None needed.



Sir John Gifford
Cabinet Secretary and head of the civil service: responsible for running Whitehall and ensuring intelligence reports are properly distributed. His role: advised that Whitehall documents should not be disclosed to the Matrix Churchill defence, and failed to ensure relevant documents were given in time to the prosecution. Scott's likely verdicts: passed the buck and avoided the question of who should take responsibility for any misleading of Parliament - ministers or civil servants. His defence: upheld traditional constitutional principles. Could not interfere with independence of Customs as a prosecuting authority.

Whitehall builds Scott fallout shelter

Labour shares officials' fury over handling of report

Richard Norton-Taylor and David Hencke

A TEAM of hand-picked civil servants from across Whitehall will today start preparing a damage limitation exercise for government ministers over Sir Richard Scott's five-volume report into the arms-to-Iraq scandal.

The team will draw up guidance for government whips to distribute to Tory MPs, and prepare a media pack to be handed to journalists as soon as the report is officially published next Thursday.

Sir Robin Butler, the Cabinet Secretary, has agreed with Sir Richard that only those who have given a written assurance that they will keep it to themselves will receive advance copies of the report. They include individuals expected to be criticised by the judge, notably William Waldegrave, Chief Secretary to the Treasury and former Foreign Office minister, and

the Attorney General, Sir Nicholas Lyell.

Civil servants who are expected to be criticised are as furious as Labour over the handling of the report. Liz Symons, general secretary of the First Division Association which represents senior officials, yesterday described the

'It is of paramount importance that ministers give truthful information to the House'

arrangements as "thoroughly inequitable".

Although civil servants named in the report have been given the unprecedented right to defend themselves in public, Whitehall managers have imposed strict conditions on what they can say. Ms Symons said they have been told to clear their state-

ments with their departments and say "nothing contrary to government policy".

Robin Cook, shadow foreign secretary told John Major to call a halt to what he called the "Tory campaign" to undermine the inquiry in the face of a series of attacks on the way Sir Richard conducted the inquiry from two former foreign secretaries, Lord Howe and Douglas Hurd.

Lord Howe has described the inquiry as "the only one in history where lawyers were allowed to be seen and not heard". Mr Hurd said the Government may not accept all the recommendations in Sir Richard's report.

"It is not the fairness of the Scott inquiry which worries the Tories, but its thoroughness", said Mr Cook. He said Labour would demand that the Government accepted Sir Richard's conclusions in full and acted on all his recommendations.

Mr Cook singled out Sir Richard's expected recommendation that never again

Judge hits back at criticisms

Government and Parliament must change the political culture which made this scandal possible", said Mr Cook.

Sir Robin Butler told MPs yesterday that he would be accountable for his actions whatever the findings of the Scott inquiry says.

Sir Robin, the first civil servant to have access yesterday to the final report, was being questioned by the Commons public services select committee on the future of Whitehall last night.

He told Giles Radice, its Labour chairman: "I will be accountable for its findings

notice to see the report before publication.

He told MPs that the Government was still discussing whether to allow civil servants more time.

"No decision has been made", he said.

But most MPs and journalists believe that ministers will not be able to resist the temptation to put their gloss on the report before official publication date.

Tory MPs will be particularly anxious to find out what Sir Richard says about the handling of the prosecution of three former Matrix Churchill directors. Four serving cabinet ministers signed Public Interest Immunity certificates which, if upheld by the trial judge, could have led to the businessmen being unjustly imprisoned.

Labour is concerned as much by what Sir Richard says about why ministers repeatedly failed Parliament as about what the real policy was on arms exports to Iraq.

Documents disclosed at the Scott inquiry showed that the Government was mainly concerned about the outcry the disclosure of the shift in policy would have provoked as a result of Saddam Hussein's gassing of Iraqi Kurds.

Leader comment, page 5; Waiting in silence, page 9

Most MPs believe that ministers will put their gloss on the report before publication date

but as to responsibility I shall cross that bridge when I come to it."

He said he hoped that there would not be premature coverage of the report in the newspapers.

Earlier he was careful to deny that a decision had been taken not to allow civil servants more than six hours

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The Guardian Thursday February 8 1996

News in brief

'Quiet wedding' for Parker Bowles

CAMILLA Parker Bowles's ex-husband Andrew, aged 56, yesterday married Rosemary Fitzmaurice, 54, at Chelsea register office in London. The 10-minute wedding was supposed to be a quiet affair for close family, but news of their engagement leaked out...

Cinema complexes planned

AN Anglo-American entertainment company yesterday announced plans to build 12 multiplex theatres over the next 18 months - a total of 145 screens - creating 800 jobs. Cine-UK said it planned to open a further eight Cineworld complexes over the next five years...

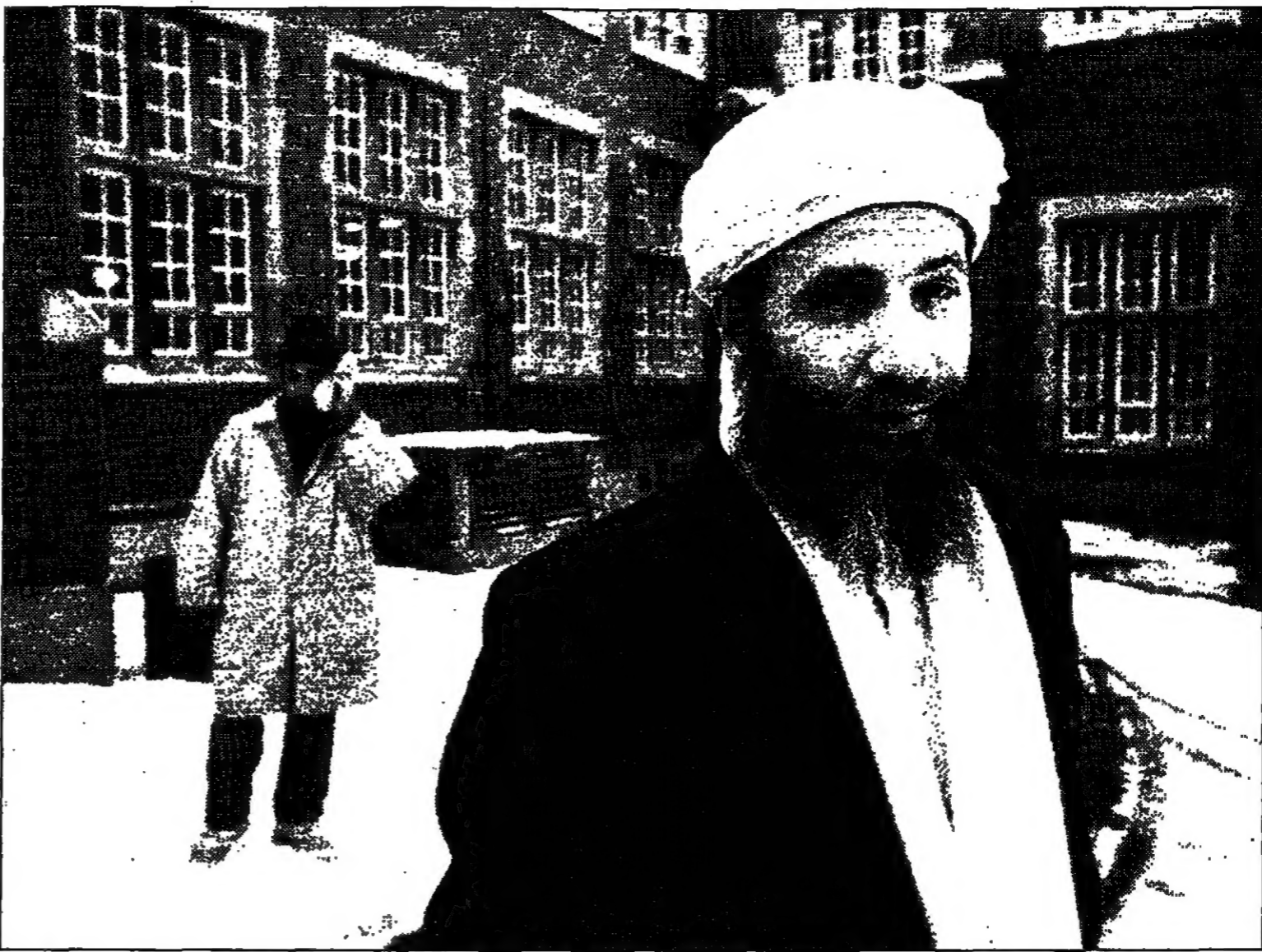
Dublin plans divorce bill

THE Irish government plans to introduce a bill "at the earliest possible opportunity" to permit divorce following the failure yesterday of a legal attempt to overturn the referendum vote for a change in legislation...

UK accused over mudflats

BRITAIN was accused yesterday of breaking a European Union conservation directive when it failed to protect mudflats in the Medway estuary on the north coast of Kent. The Government excluded the area known as Lappel Bank, important for shelduck, ringed plover, grey plover, dunlin and redshank, when classifying a wildlife preservation zone in 1983...

Ex-singer stands by query over dissident facing deportation • Rift follows resignation



Yusuf Islam... 'Muslim schools have to go with a begging bowl to affluent Muslim countries because of lack of government funding' PHOTOGRAPH DAVID SLITTON

Saudi ire shakes top Muslim school

THE future of Britain's most successful Muslim school, founded by Yusuf Islam, the former pop singer Cat Stevens, is under threat because Saudi Arabia has withdrawn 85 per cent of its annual cash subsidy. Last week, children were sent home from the 300-strong Islamia School in Brent, north London, because the heating system broke down. Some 10-year-olds had to stand during science lessons yesterday because of a shortage of chairs...

year to help plug the gap between the school's annual £50,000 fee income and its £750,000 budget. This year, donations from Saudi Arabia - usually made during the month of Ramadan - have dropped to around £25,000. The cut appears to be changing. As well as his embarrassing intervention on behalf of Saudi dissidents - in fact, Mr Islam's private letter merely expressed concern and asked for information - the former musician was also accused of opposing the 1991 Gulf war and failing to attend...

Mas'ari's supporters and called the decision to deport the Saudi exile "an ominous turn". "We try to be unbiased," he said, "but if I was locked up I hope someone would ask about me. It is only wishing for your brother what you wish for yourself." He said the Government had put Britain's 44 Muslim schools in a position where they had to go with a begging bowl to more affluent Muslim countries rather than funding them itself. Three years ago, Islamia's bid for voluntary-aided status - in line with 7,000 Christian and 24 Jewish state schools - was turned down because of a surplus of school places in Brent. Now Islamia is hoping it stands a better chance if it applies to be grant maintained...

Islamic radical party splits

MAR BAKRI, leader of Britain's radical Muslim group, Hizb ut Tahrir, has resigned after a dispute about strategy towards the Muslim community. The rupture could have a far-reaching influence on Muslim opinion. One of the principal disagreements is said to have centred on Mr Bakri's desire to work with other Muslim groups to tackle problems he believed preoccupied the community, such as racism and unemployment. Other senior Hizb members believed such an approach would divert the party from its goal of resurrecting the old Islamic caliphate in the Middle East. Such policies reflect the party's Arab origins, though even in the Middle East the idea of an Islamic caliphate is regarded as obscure even among radicals. Other groups said by pursuing such ideas the Hizb ut Tahrir risked becoming irrelevant to British Muslims. Another dispute centred on the approach to non-Muslims with whom Mr Bakri wanted to maintain a dialogue. Other senior party members believed such contacts would jeopardise "security". They wanted the party to go "underground" and have a less high profile. Mr Bakri now says he wants to form his own party, the Muhajiroun - the Emigrants. The new party will bring together such groups as the Association of Muslim Lawyers, the Gathering of Muslim Parents and the Islamic International Front. Their profile is much more middle class and middle aged than the membership of Hizb ut Tahrir, which concentrates its activities among students. Mr Bakri says he now wants to concentrate on penetrating the predominant Pakistani community and working with other British Muslim groups. Hizb ut Tahrir's deputy, Faez Qassem, a former town planner in Islington, north London, refused to comment on the split or say who was the new leader. Both Mr Bakri and Mr Qassem say the two parties will not compete for membership.

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The COOPERATIVE BANK advertisement. It features images of Visa credit cards and a large headline: 'Still paying for a credit card? Why?'. The text explains that some banks charge as much as £12 a year for a credit card, while the Co-operative Bank Visa cards are guaranteed free for life. It offers a special discount rate of just 1% per month (12.6% APR variable) and a 0% annual fee. A large number '0800 135 000' is prominently displayed. At the bottom, there is a form for requesting more information, including fields for name, address, and phone number.

Cash cuts force British Council to close offices and axe jobs

Eight British Council offices abroad are to close because of budget cuts, and more may have to go as managers ponder axing hundreds of British-based jobs and selling premises. The eight offices - in Algeria, Yemen and unspecified countries in Africa and Latin America - are to go at once, it emerged yesterday. But up to 20 of the council's 109 overseas operations could close. Yusuf Islam bought the original school premises and has been subsidising Islamia fees to the tune of £250,000 a year. Saudi Arabia donated £1.5 million to buy the current building and had been donating around £150,000 a year to help plug the gap between the school's annual £50,000 fee income and its £750,000 budget.

6 per cent of their budgets. "We only have one realistic option for dealing with [the cut]: a major reduction in staff," a council official said. "And if we can't function with reduced UK staff we then may have to close other posts abroad." Candidates for immediate closure are offices in countries where there are security problems, little demand, or stiff competition, especially in Francophone regions. Expanding areas, such as the former Soviet Union and the Tiger economies of Asia and the Pacific Rim, are to be spared. The council is seen as the poor relation of the BBC World Service, also funded by the Foreign Office. "The World Service has this great image because everyone knows what they do," said one Whitehall insider. "The British Council doesn't have enough PR oomph." Council staff are furious that the cuts have come despite their own recent sacrifices and the praise heaped on them at last year's Britain in the World conference. Peter Daly, secretary of the council's trade union, said: "We relocated 650 jobs to Manchester in 1992. We've got rid of about 300 jobs by voluntary retirement. We feel we've done our bit to get a leaner and more modern organisation."

Germans will face European court over 'mad cow' ban

ATTEMPTS to ban imports of British beef by three German regional governments in the wake of health scares about "mad cow" disease will be challenged in the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg, the European Commission said yesterday. Commission officials reacted to moves by the states' governments by threatening them with court action for breaching EU regulations. Rhineland-Palatinate, North Rhine Westphalia and Bavaria have announced they are banning British beef imports because of fears the beef may transmit the incurable Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, the human form of mad cow disease, despite a federal government warning such a ban is illegal under EU law. If the German ban is challenged, officials in Brussels may find themselves forcing the Germans to import beef that is itself banned in some parts of Britain. A commission spokesman claimed that a British schools' ban on beef "complicated" the action.

Tories cut Labour's poll lead on law and order to one point as crime figures fall

LABOUR is still seen as the best party on law and order, but Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, has closed the gap to only one point in the latest ICM poll for the Guardian. Asked which party has the best policies for dealing with crime, 24 per cent say Labour, 23 per cent say the Conservatives, 5 per cent say the Liberal Democrats and nearly half say no party at all. A year and a half ago, when Jack Straw took over from Tony Blair as shadow home secretary, Labour had a 14-point lead. The narrowing of the gap has coincided with and probably been caused by the fall in crime figures. Although they started falling in 1993, this did not show up in six-monthly figures released by the Home Office until September 1994, and was confirmed in April and September 1995. Brian Mahoney, Tory party chairman, constantly calls it "the biggest fall in 40 years". Labour's front bench has pointed out that, although crime figures have dropped by 10 per cent in the past two years, they have risen by 101 per cent since the Tories took office. At the same time the conviction rate has fallen.

Table with 2 columns: Party and Year (1992-1996). Rows include Conservative, Labour, Lib Dem, Con lead, Lab lead, Home Sec'y, Shadow, and Villain's friend/Victim's friend.

The Tories were constantly ahead of Labour on law and order in the 1980s and were 14 points ahead at the last election. Tony Blair captured the lead for Labour when he was shadow home secretary in 1993. Mr Howard recaptured it for the Tories when he became Home Secretary in 1993, but lost it again in 1994. Michael Heseltine, Deputy Prime Minister, has this month tried to brand Labour as "the villain's friend" and claim the title of "the victim's friend" for his party. "That claim is in danger of blowing up in his face. When ICM asked its respondents which party, if any, fitted the description 'the villain's friend', 25 per cent saw the Tories in this light and only 13 per cent chose Labour. Only 11 per cent saw the Conservatives as "the victim's friend", while 24 per cent thought the description fitted Labour better. But a majority felt that neither party fitted either description - a warning to both parties not to take the public for fools by making promises that cannot be fulfilled. ICM interviewed a random sample of 1,200 adults aged 18+ by telephone between February 2 and 4. Interviews were conducted throughout the country and the results have been weighted to the profile of all adults.

President in quandary as bellicose generals call for action • Arms trade could halt American financing of \$10bn business deals

Beijing divided on Taiwan strategy

Andrew Higgins
in Hong Kong

PRESIDENT Jiang Zemin of China and his generals are seriously at odds over what to do about Taiwan, according to a report in Hong Kong yesterday. The president is said to have failed to calm the desire of his generals for speedy military action.

Such a split would be a grave blow to Mr Jiang, who will need the army's backing to stay in power after the death of Deng Xiaoping, now aged 91.

Yesterday the Liberation Army Daily, the official organ of the three million-strong People's Liberation Army, ordered unwavering obedience to Mr Jiang. "Whatever situation arises or whatever waves we meet, we must be of one heart and mind and maintain the same stand as the party," said a circular issued by the central military commission.

The South China Post, Hong Kong's main English-language newspaper, said Chinese generals were "seen to push ahead with plans for a military invasion", despite warnings from Mr Jiang that haste would jeopardise Britain's handing over of Hong Kong next year and damage China's economy.

The hawkers are said to include General Zhang Zhen, aged 81, vice-chairman of the commission, which is said to have replaced the politburo as China's dominant decision-making body.

There has been a series of leaks to Hong Kong news-

Taiwan's favour, and the more bellicose generals in Beijing may favour a pre-emptive strike.

But those counselling patience point to China's own military build-up. A stalled agreement with Moscow for SU-27 fighters has just been unblocked. Beijing has so far received only 20 of the 72 high-performance aircraft promised. Under a new accord Russia will deliver the rest and license the production of supersonic interceptors in China.

The Chinese-language Hong

Taipei has put its troops on alert and cut leave before the New Year

Kong newspaper Ming Pao reported yesterday that the PLA was ready to begin war games on Saturday off the coast of Fujian, facing Taiwan. Taiwan, regarded by Beijing as a rebel province, has put troops on alert and restricted leave before the Chinese New Year on February 18.

At a campaign rally in Taipei yesterday, President Lee Teng-hui ridiculed China's demands that his government should submit to Beijing.

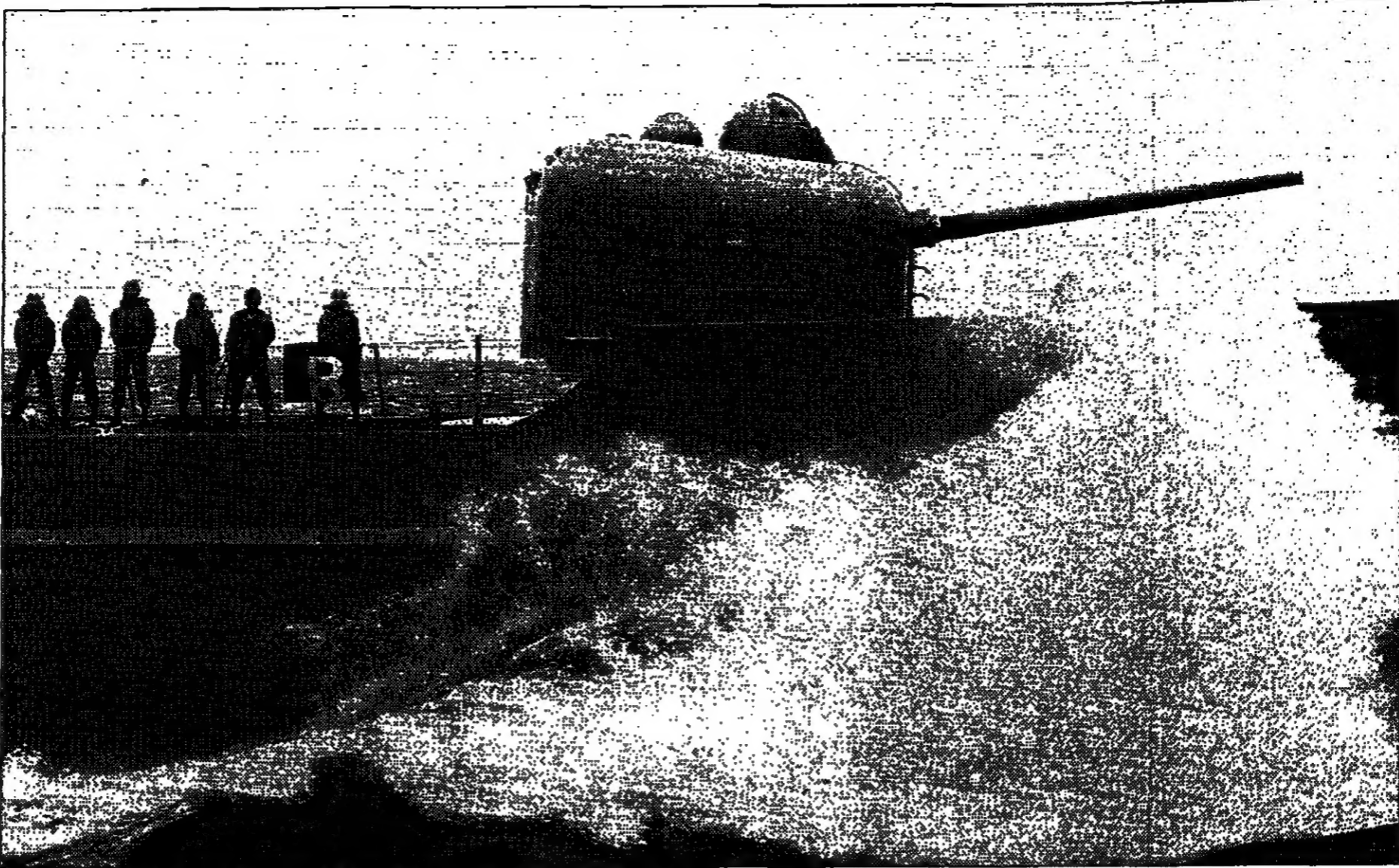
"These communists have not ruled Taiwan for one hour, for one minute," he said. "They have not collected a single cent of tax here and yet they still dare to shout 'you're mine, you're mine'."

The United States has sought to play down fears of war. In Washington yesterday an assistant secretary of state, Winston Lord, said that China did not intend to take military action against Taiwan.

"Having examined all of the available evidence, we cannot conclude that there is an imminent threat to Taiwan," he told the Senate foreign relations committee.

The biggest worry in Taipei and Washington is that China's policy towards Taiwan is being driven by the internal politics of an insecure leadership.

Mr Jiang, party chief and chairman of the military commission, has collected more titles than any previous Chinese leader. But he has none of the prestige of Mao Zedong or Mr Deng, both of whom came to power after long military service, and he still needs to prove himself to veteran soldiers.



Water guard... A Taiwanese frigate pushes through heavy seas during anti-submarine exercises off eastern Taiwan

PHOTOGRAPH BY EDIE SHIM

China's nuclear sale to Pakistan puts Clinton on spot

Jeffrey Smith
in Washington

US INTELLIGENCE says that China sold sensitive nuclear weapons-related equipment to Pakistan last year, sales which could trigger a halt to US government financing of nearly \$10 billion worth of American business deals in China.

Clinton advisers are studying the intelligence report to work out how to respond. Legislation passed in 1994 requires the president to block loan guarantees by the Export-Import Bank or waive

the penalties after such intelligence is received.

In a previous case, involving the alleged sale of Chinese missiles to Pakistan, the state department avoided imposing sanctions by deciding that the evidence was not strong enough. A senior state department official said that the US had not yet decided that China had done anything to incur sanctions.

But other officials said there was no doubt about the new report's conclusions, which could embarrass the administration because it wanted to avoid damaging trade ties with China.

The aim of the sanctions would be to punish China for helping Pakistan to produce highly-enriched uranium, a key ingredient of nuclear weapons. But US officials say the nuclear sale is only one of several recent Chinese actions that may disrupt commercial and diplomatic relations with the US.

China's export of anti-ship cruise missiles to Iran last year may also qualify for sanctions.

Another US law requires sanctions against any country giving "destabilising numbers and types of advanced conventional weapons" to

Iran, branded a terrorist state by Washington.

US officials said that China may not have sold enough missiles to force the mandatory withdrawal of development and technical assistance or military exchanges and sensitive exports. But four senators recently wrote to President Clinton saying that either sanctions or a waiver were now required in this case.

Washington has been worried for a long time about Chinese military assistance to Pakistan, which Beijing regards as a political ally and a military counterweight to

India. US intelligence officials claim that Pakistan is building its nuclear arsenal largely from information supplied by China. Beijing denies this.

US intelligence also seems to have located crates containing Chinese-made medium-range missiles in Pakistan. If confirmed, this will force the US to cut off billions worth of trade with China. The administration has decided that sanctions are not needed until the missiles are seen outside their crates.

The latest Chinese nuclear transfer to Pakistan, detected by the CIA, involves a shipment of 5,000 specialised

magnets to the Abdul Qadeer Khan Research Laboratory in Kahuta, near Islamabad, named after the father of the Pakistani nuclear bomb programme.

US experts say the magnets are clearly meant to be installed in high-speed centrifuges at the plant which enriches uranium for nuclear weapons.

Congressional sources said that the shipment therefore triggered provisions of the 1994 Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Act which forces the cut-off of financial aid for trade with China. — Washington Post

Equally important is the arrival of 210 F-16s and Mirage 2000 warplanes

papers by Chinese sources, threatening military force. But it remains unclear whether they reflect intent or merely media manipulation aimed at rattling Taiwan before it holds its first democratic presidential election on March 23.

Perhaps as important as the election in China's calculations is the arrival in Taiwan this summer of the first of 210 American F-16s and French-made Mirage 2000 warplanes. The aircraft, ordered four years ago but only now ready for delivery, will shift the balance of air power sharply in

Muslim rebels put spoke in Ramos's wheel of fortune

But for a growing insurgency, the southern island of Mindanao could lead the rest of the Philippines to prosperity. Nick Cumming-Bruce reports from Camp Abubakre



ing a boom. Their success has raised awareness of how the island can help the Philippines to emulate its more prosperous neighbours Malaysia and Indonesia.

But Mindanao's prospects rest on finding the peace that has eluded the southern Muslim heartlands round Cotabato. Feudal clans nurse memories of the independent sultanate that was annexed by Manila in 1565, and decades of conflict have left a legacy of poverty.

To meet the threat from the MILF and more militant splinter groups, Manila has committed more than half its army to Mindanao, including tanks and armoured personnel carriers, helicopters and ground-attack aircraft.

But its attempts to deploy reinforcements in MILF-controlled areas last year provoked counter-moves by the MILF which increased the tension.

More than 70,000 people died in the war between the Manila government and Muslim separatists — then led by the Moro National Liberation Front — in the early 1970s. A raid on the small town of Ipi last year, in which gunmen killed 47 people, looted six banks and burned down the town centre, provided a vivid reminder of how violence can flare in Mindanao.

Christians-dominated Mindanao cities like Cagayan de Oro in the north and the tuna-fishing centre of General Santos in the south-east are rid-

than double the deliveries to the MILF.

"The shipments are quite continuous," confirmed Murad, the MILF chief of staff, though he said reports of their size were "quite exaggerated".

For the moment MNLF and MILF leaders maintain a loose co-operation, even if turf wars between subordinates can end, as one did on Saturday, in fatal gunfights.

"We recognise all efforts to find a peace," the MILF vice-chairman for political affairs, Ghidzali Gafar, smoothly asserted. "We do not oppose the negotiations." But he was blunt about their chances of success: "Nothing good will come out of them."

The territorial formula thrashed out between Manila and the MNLF appears to be leading to an autonomous zone made up of six Mindanao provinces and two or three cities, far short of the 13 provinces envisaged in the 1976 Tripoli agreement held up by the MILF as the blueprint for peace.

"The question of how MILF leaders will respond to a Manila-MNLF pact worries government and military leaders.

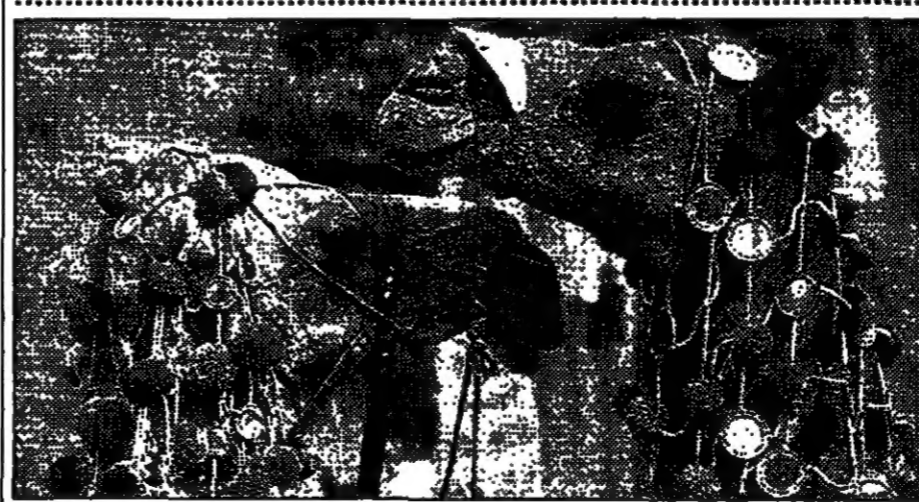
"They're having the time of their lives," General Raul Urzua, commander of an infantry division based in Cotabato, wryly observed of the middle-aged Muslim leaders pouring out militant rhetoric while reaping the benefits of extensive business interests.

The government forces are more numerous and better equipped. And even round Cotabato, the MILF has little mass support. The civilian population is disillusioned with the rampant corruption of Mindanao's Muslim politicians, the endless MNLF demands for pay-offs and the arbitrary MILF "taxes" on their crops.

But a series of bloody, Ipi-like strikes on Mindanao's centres of economic growth is well within the rebels' capacity. "We will try our best not to have any conflict with any group," Murad declared. "But if we can't agree, there is no way but to resort to armed struggle."

Government intelligence estimates from late 1995 suggest that the MILF had received 29 shipments of arms since the previous year, more

News in brief



Safe sex... A colourfully decorated pair of camels grace an AIDS awareness rally in the Indian capital, New Delhi, yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAY RAMAR

Zaire 'set to march refugees across border to Rwanda'

UNITED NATIONS officials say Zaire may again try to repatriate hundreds of thousands of Rwandan refugees by force from camps around Goma, writes Chris McGreal in Lagos.

Zaire has banned foreign reporters from the area. UN officials in Rwanda say they have been told to prepare to move large numbers of refugees who will be marched across the border. The first target of Zaire troops is expected to be one of the biggest camps, Kibumba, which contains about 300,000 Hutus.

Zaire has been threatening to close the camps for months. Last year it set a December 31

deadline for all Rwandans to leave, but backed down after international protests. In August, Zaire expelled 15,000 Rwandan and Burundian refugees before it was again pressured to stop. This time it would appear to have the tacit endorsement of the UN.

About a million Rwandans who fled in July 1994 are still in Zaire. Some were responsible for the slaughter of Tutsis and do not wish to return to Rwanda to account for their crimes. But others are simply Hutu refugees who fear reprisals by the Tutsi-dominated army which overthrew the Hutu extremist regime two years ago.

FIS leader's peace initiative

ANWAR HADDAM, president of the parliamentary delegation in exile of Algeria's Islamic Salvation Front, will launch an initiative for peace with Algeria in Stockholm today, a host organisation spokesman said.

"We will be proposing a peaceful solution to the conflict and putting forward a concrete proposal," Christer Gustavsson, international secretary of the League of Christian Social Democrats, said.

"We hope that this will be a step leading towards direct negotiations between the government and opposition in Algeria to break the spiral of violence in the country," he added.

The FIS was outlawed in Algeria after the military-backed authorities cancelled the 1992 general elections it was poised to win.

The group has been blamed for the violence in Algeria, in which an estimated 50,000 people have died. — Reuter.

US untangles the lines in telecom revolution

Azarem Ashur

AMERICANS will be able to receive their television and telecommunications services down a single wire, from a single company, and pay a single bill at the end of the month, under a telecommunications bill due to be signed into law today by President Clinton.

The Telecommunications Reform Bill introduces the most sweeping changes to the United States' \$300 billion (£138.3 billion) telecommunications industry in more than 60 years.

The law — which covers everything from basic telephone to digital broadcasting and the Internet — should mean a giant leap in the development of an information superhighway. But civil rights groups have vowed to seek a judicial review of sections of the bill which relate to censorship.

For the first time competition will be allowed in the \$96 billion local call market, which has been controlled by a handful of regional Bell operating companies.

In return for opening up their local monopolies, the regional operators will be able to enter the long-distance market and compete with the dominant player, company AT & T, and its smaller rivals.

The bill also includes a number of controversial social clauses to control indecent material on traditional and new media. These include a requirement that new television sets must contain a chip that can block unsuitable programmes, and strict new controls of indecency on the Internet.

"It's a blow to democracy. The provisions which censor the Internet are quite damaging," said Danny Weitzner, of the Centre for Democracy and Technology pressure group in Washington. The group and the American Civil Liberties Union have vowed to challenge the provisions in the courts as unconstitutional.

Telecom's power struggle, page 11

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Yeltsin orders West's hi-tech

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Site of Nazis' last shot turned into museum

A reconstructed V-2 that should have destroyed London is a key exhibit, writes **Paul Webster**

MORE than 50 years after Hitler gave the order to destroy London with waves of V-2 rockets, one of the missiles was installed yesterday in the massive Pas de Calais bunker that should have been at the centre of the Nazis' last desperate throw.

The site near Saint Omer at Helfaut-Wisernes, where 50 missiles were to be launched every day, escaped serious damage, despite being hit by 3,000 tonnes of bombs, but no missiles were ever fired from it. After lying empty since the war, the bunker is being converted into the European Second World War History Centre, with a reconstructed V-2 as the key exhibit.

The RAF destroyed a nearby V-2 site and the huge raid here persuaded the Germans to abandon Helfaut and develop mobile sites elsewhere which did not have the capacity to fulfil Hitler's ambitions, says the museum's curator, Guy

Froment, said during a visit to the bunker.

The 210ft-diameter dome stands above miles of underground galleries where the rockets were to be assembled.

"No RAF bomb — not even the famous tallboys — could pierce the 20 feet of concrete, but supply lines were too vulnerable and the site was evacuated intact in July, 1944," Mr Froment added.

The French and European authorities are spending about £8 million to develop the museum, which will record both the German defeat in the second Battle of Britain and the birth of the space age, created by captured German rocket scientists.

"The Pas de Calais is a unique observatory of the second world war and its consequences," the museum's historian, Yves Le Maner, said.

"It was the centre of the fight between Germany and the allies, the most heavily occupied area of France,

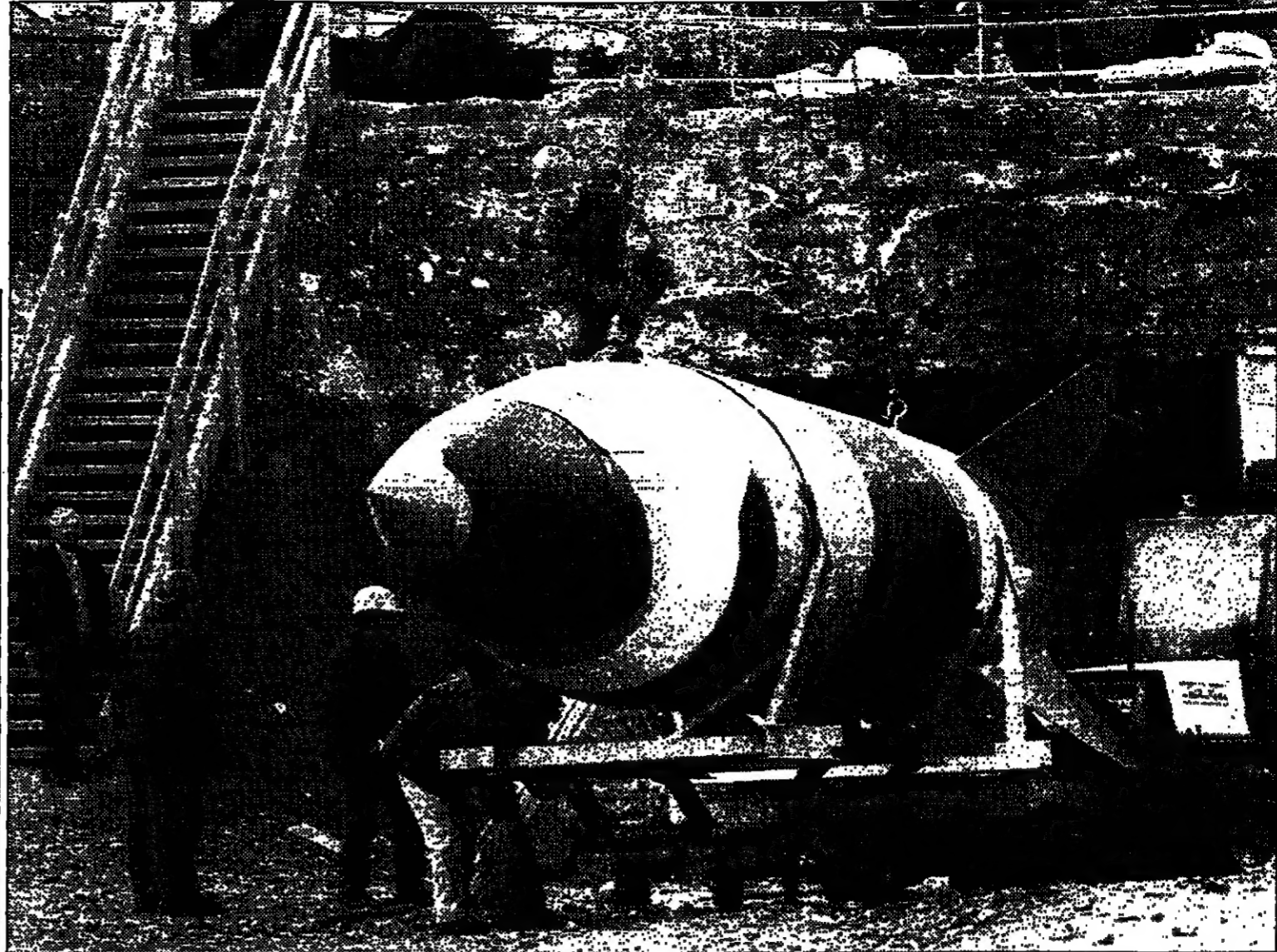
and it inspired the most heroic resistance movement.

The museum will tell all the story from all sides by not shying away from the horror. The V-2 rocket base here was built with slave labour and the missile itself constructed by prisoners at Dora, concentration camp, where they died in their thousands, unaware of their contribution to the 20th century's greatest adventure."

The savagery of the Nazi rocket era has recently been underlined by the discovery in Washington archives that Werner von Braun, the most celebrated space pioneering engineer, was a member of the SS, which terrorised the slave gangs.

"This was a fact that the American government deliberately kept secret," Mr Le Maner added. "Space exploration had to remain pure."

The museum will open next year and is expected to attract 240,000 visitors annually, many of them British. The main area will be named after a British professor, Reginald Jones, whose intelligence work uncovered the secret weapon programme and the Helfaut site.



"Unique observatory" ... The V2 is pulled into the bunker near St Omer, in the Pas de Calais, being converted at a cost of £8 million into a museum both of the German defeat and the birth of the space age

Serb officers face tribunal

Stephen Bates in Brussels

THE United Nations war crimes tribunal in The Hague said yesterday it was considering indicting two senior Serbian army officers for civilian atrocities after they were picked up by Bosnian government forces while on their way to a meeting with Nato officers.

General Djordje Djukic, a close aide to Ratko Mladic, the Bosnian Serb army commander, and Colonel Aleksa Krmanovic were seized after taking a wrong turning near Sarajevo last week. Richard Goldstone, the tribunal prosecutor, has asked for their arrest while they are investigated for failing to stop their troops firing on civilians throughout the siege of Sarajevo.

The Serbian government reacted angrily to the definition, suspending contact with the Bosnian government and demanding Nato forces intervention to release them. General Milan Gvero, the Serbian army deputy commander, said they must be released "if peace is to be maintained in Bosnia".

Justice Goldstone's request strengthens the Bosnian government's hand by stating that the arrest of the Serb officers comes under the terms of the Geneva convention on genocide.

If they are extradited to the tribunal's headquarters in The Hague, the two officers will be the second and third

suspects to be charged with war crimes in the Bosnian conflict.

Bezir Gavrankapetanovic, president of the Bosnian government's war crimes commission, said Gen Djukic and Col Krmanovic were responsible for the crimes committed by troops under their command if they did not prevent killings or were giving orders for others to carry them out.

A tribunal spokesman declined last night to give details of the allegations against the two men.

But a tribunal statement thanked the Bosnian government for its co-operation and pointedly reminded other governments that they were also obliged to assist its investigations.

Earlier this week Antonio Cassese, the tribunal's president, expressed disappointment that the Serb and Croat authorities had shown a lack of co-operation since the signing of the Dayton peace agreement.

• Hundreds of angry Bosnian Croats besieged the headquarters of the European Union mission in Mostar and assaulted its leader yesterday because of his proposal for reunifying the city.

Hans Koschnick, the EU administrator, was trapped in his armoured car by protesters who danced on top of the vehicle, chanting that the German diplomat should be killed.

Several EU vehicles were overturned and damaged.

Yeltsin orders targeting of West's hi-tech secrets

David Hearst in Moscow

PRESIDENT Boris Yeltsin gave his beleaguered prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, 10 days yesterday to produce a plan to reinforce and re-equip the entire Russian army and defence industry, a sign that the president is preparing to batten down the pre-election hatches.

Mr Yeltsin accused Western security services of undermining Russia's military potential, and ordered a radical programme of hi-tech rearmament.

He claimed that Western special services had organised a "brain drain" of Russia's most talented military scientists to get Russia's secrets and weaken its high technology potential. Speaking to the national security council, he ordered intelligence chiefs to step up their efforts to secure for Russia the West's high-technology secrets.

He instructed Vyacheslav Tрубников, head of the for-

sign intelligence service (SVR), to prepare proposals for improving the mechanisms of using scientific information received through foreign intelligence in the interests of technological rearmament.

Mr Chernomyrdin's task is virtually impossible, given its size, and is a sign of the political pressure his enemies are putting on him.

Mr Yeltsin's words pleased his many intelligence and army critics, who accuse him of neglecting Russia's defence and hi-tech industries in the name of free-market reform.

His accusation against Western spies is partly political, in that it offers his nationalist critics an easy explanation of Russia's current industrial weakness. But it is partly based on serious Russian intelligence estimates.

The federal security service claimed last year to have identified and expelled more than 50 foreign agents from Nizhni Novgorod, near the Russian nuclear-bomb making centre.

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I know you thought the job of Heritage Secretary would be fun. How could you possibly guess that you'd be mugged by a bunch of geriatric sports fans?

Vincent Hanna

Trying to go Scott-free

The sleaze continues right up to publication

FIRST they broke the rules on selling arms to Saddam Hussein. Then they tried to keep it secret with misleading replies to Parliament. Then they even signed gagging orders covering up evidence of government complicity...

acting as "detective, inquisitor, advocate and judge". What Lord Howe wanted was the right for lawyers representing witnesses to be able to cross-examine other witnesses. This was absurd. To do so would have meant the collapse of the inquiry...

Lord Justice Scott's inquiry was set up to restore authority to a government with its back against the wall. John Major set it up, selected Sir Richard Scott as its chairman, and laid down its unequivocal and wide remit...

Sir Richard has bent over backwards to be fair. Every witness was given a list of questions in advance, the right to correct the transcripts, and the right to make representations against any criticism of their actions in his first draft...

In this three year period, Sir Richard has received evidence from 200 witnesses, heard 60 of them in public, gathered over 200,000 pages of documents, listened to 430 hours of evidence and produced a 1,800 page report...

Many Whitehall lights will remain burning for the next 192 hours. Ministers have made it clear. They intend to "tough it out". As Robin Cook noted yesterday, it is not the fairness of Scott which is worrying ministers but his thoroughness...

From the beginning Lord Howe, the Foreign Secretary for some of the period under scrutiny, accused Scott of

Shaking up the estate we're in

Constitutional reform is now Labour's most radical policy

TOO MANY British politicians still dismiss constitutional reform as radical chic, Islington stuff. Even the Thatcherite right, normally so eager to change everything else, hangs a Do Not Disturb notice on the British constitution...

Mr Blair asked almost all the right questions and gave many of the right answers. The overarching question was simple: are we satisfied with the way we are governed now? In a wide-ranging set of answers we heard new emphasis on the direct election of mayors and on the detail of House of Lords reform...

Tony Blair has made constitutional change a pillar of the New Labour project, a claim which he cemented last night in his John Smith Lecture in London. His speech contained little that he has not said before, and it built on commitments previously made by Mr Smith...

Yet the overall effect of the speech is extremely positive. Constitutional reform is now the biggest divide between the two major parties. It is the ground on which Labour is at its most radical and the Conservatives, as they again showed yesterday, their most abjectly defensive...

A painter for the (patient) people

Forget about the hype. Cézanne is worth the wait at the Tate

CEZANNE said that art never addressed itself to more than an extremely small number of individuals - but that won't stop 300,000 people from addressing his first retrospective for 60 years at the Tate Gallery in London. It is easy to be cynical about the hype surrounding the event as the media circus tracks it from Paris to Philadelphia by way of Millbank...

and widens the appeal of art. Even those who will never see the exhibition will get pleasure from the media blitz. And the act of reporting alters what is reported. Cézanne has hitherto been sitting in his own shadow. A painter's painter who unwittingly created the infrastructure for Cubism, he was acclaimed for the genius of his controversial bathing scenes and for the sublime way he deconstructed the holy stillness of a Provencal morning...



Letters to the Editor

Try dealing with reality

TOM HODGKINSON (Tees starts in the revival of DTV, February 6) is disingenuous for, while affecting empathy for those marginalised by the "look-after-yourself economy", in reality he celebrates the transition whereby we become dealers, in control of our destinies...

Shock for those in power

IT MIGHT be worth paying someone £500,000 a year plus perks to run a sensible national energy policy. You might find someone who could disregard Tony right-wing doctrine, someone who knows that you can't stockpile gas at power stations...

I AM freezing. So is the rest of my family. Our central heating system broke down a week ago. We have a three-star service contract with British Gas for which we pay nearly £100 a year. However, after a week in freezing weather, and a five-minute visit by a diagnosing engineer, we don't seem anywhere nearer repair than we were a week ago...

CEDRIC Brown said, that with British Gas being split into two companies, his job had disappeared. If so, why is he being paid £120,000 consultancy fees? Steve Elliott, 32 Gerrard Street, Lancaster LA1 5LZ.

Nookie and the steamy mags

THE introduction of a Bill to regulate the content of teenage magazines (Magazine bill doomed, February 6) is a source of deep concern to those who are working to reduce Britain's still excessively high under-16 pregnancy rate. Every serious international study has shown that in countries where sex is openly discussed with teenagers by parents, teachers and the media, the pregnancy rate is far below ours.

MY (almost) 13-year-old daughter is a regular reader of the magazines singled out by Peter Luff as in need of regulation. For the publishers to claim that they are not aimed at the early-teen market is patently nonsense. One only has to look at the photo-sets provided in many of them, a uniform combination of handsome youths on one side and fluffy animals on the other, to realise that. Would a magazine genuinely aimed at 16- and 17-year-olds have quite so many kittens?

ONE week after the British Antarctic Survey reported the disintegration of the Antarctic ice-fields, the Government cancels £30 million worth of home-insulation grants (Some grants axed to pay for quango, February 3). It is difficult to imagine a more terrifying insight into the cynicism of government policy on global warming.

CLAIMS by Michael Heseltine and other ministers that it is in the best interests of these industries to produce energy in the most efficient way possible obscures the fact that their prime motive is to sell as much energy as possible, not conserve it. Thus the electricity regulator, Stephen Leach, has allowed the minuscule expenditure of £1 per household per year on energy conservation, while the gas regulator, Claire Spottiswoode, has blocked energy-

saving proposals put forward by the Energy Savings Trust. The start-up budget for this government-appointed quango of £5million per annum, should be set against the combined profits of the gas and electricity supply industries of £2 billion per annum (1994-95). (Dr) Robin Russell Jones, St Thomas' Hospital, Lambeth Palace Road, London SE1 7EH.

THOSE who were without power on February 6 would have not been able to watch their televisions to learn that the late-night weather forecast on TV was "sponsored by PowerGen producing electricity whatever the weather". Tim Todd, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 5KY.

This blockbuster approach to art presentation is self-justifying in that the media bombardment, as much as the exhibition itself, breaks down barriers

A protest

MUST take issue with the headline of Phil Gunson's article (Army attacks oil protests, February 6) which gives the totally mistaken impression that the Mexican army "attacked" two small groups of protesters, led by the opposition PRD political party, that forcibly occupied oil installations belonging to Pemex in the state of Tabasco.

Light shed on Cézanne's dark side

TWO quotes: "Cézanne was not French. It was the negro blood of his mother that gave his canvases most of their qualities." "Elizabeth Aubert, Cézanne's mother was born... of remote Creole origin... it was from her that Paul got his conception and vision of life."

On paternal sins

LIKE Ros Coward (Comment page, February 6), I was initially mystified at the brutal treatment of asylum-seekers being sought by Michael Howard and Michael Portillo, any man's background.

A Country Diary

WOLSHINGHAM, WEARDALE: Few sounds lift the spirits in the depths of winter better than bird song, especially at the end of a long, sunless January, which has been the dullest on record. It was a hedge sparrow that first caught our attention, singing from the top of a blackthorn that still carried the last mummified, frost-withered remnants of last season's sloe crop.

Ins and outs

DAVID Buckingham asks, after the Adrian Rogers row (Letters, February 6): "How long before a politician admits to sleeping with a woman - but did not insert?" This may have already happened. A woman claimed last year that Newt Gingrich's affairs involve oral sex "because then he can say, 'I never slept with her.'" Tony Russell, Parsons Hill, New Bridge Road, Brentford, Middx TW8 0EH.

Another visit to pedants' corner

WHAT a difference a hyphen can make (Letters, February 7), including those immediately following an adjective which qualifies a distant noun. A London borough recently advertised for "a common and/or criminal lawyer". They wanted a specialist in the common and/or the criminal law but they were overwhelmed with applicants who took them literally.

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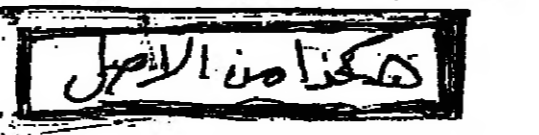
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Diary
Matthew Norman

IT IS Jeremy Paxman's most famous dictum that, when interviewing a politician, his constant thought is: "Why is this bastard lying to me?" To you, Jeremy, and to all you other nasty cynics, I am delighted today to present an honest politician. It is the Deputy Prime Minister, First Secretary of State, Viscount H塞尔丁 who said that his business techniques included keeping his creditors waiting, he was telling the simple truth. Guardian cartoonist Martin Rosen reports that the then President of the Board of Trade asked to buy a drawing which featured him as Chairman Mao (he had just been to China) for £300. The cheque did not come. Martin rang the Trade department four or five times, and each time was told to remind the President of that. The President's amnesia stretched on for two and a half months, and only when Martin was close to issuing a winding-up order on the Board of Trade did the cheque arrive. Mr H塞尔丁 is worth about £40 million.

MEANWHILE, a visitor to the Cabinet Office was amused to find a copy of World of Interiors in the waiting area. Among the magazine's useful articles was one headlined "Improving your furniture". Please God this gives Mr H塞尔丁 no big ideas about replacing the Harrods furniture on which he lavished £40,000 of our money last summer.

I HAVE received a phone message, not, alas, from my missing friend Dr Julian Lewis, but from one of Mandy Mandelson's little helpers. It seems that, in one crucial respect, yesterday's item about Mandy's role as head of all Labour Party campaigning was incorrect. At the public meeting to welcome him to Millbank Tower, the Blair apparition Margaret McDonagh did not say: "We wish you'd never left, Mandy". She in fact said: "We wish you'd never left, Peter." This seems a salutary time to remind all of you that Mr Mandelson's given name is Peter. Mandy is an affectionate nickname, the use of which Miss McDonagh (an employee after all, and not a friend) doubtless felt would be a show of over-familiarity. This sentiment does her great credit.

I AM confused by the election campaign for the Secretaryship of Glasgow University. Voting is on February 28, and a coalition of leftwing Labour and Liberal Democrats (led from afar by cuddly MP George Galloway) wants Saudi dissident Mohammed al-Mas'ari as Rector. He would be deported to Dominica — he is entitled to return each month to chair the university's finance meeting, or so they hope. Mr al-Mas'ari has widespread support: rightwing incumbent Johnny Saill (Zoe's dad) is willing to retire, and Ian Hislop already has. The stumbling block, it seems, is the Blairite Labour club which refuses to withdraw Richard Wilson, even though the actor is known to stand aside. I cannot decide which is more baffling — the Blairites' eagerness to associate with a self-confessed Socialist (Mr Wilson was once on the Redgrave wing in Equity), or their apparent distaste for Mr al-Mas'ari.

Exciting news from the world of retailing. Knightsbridge Crown Court is planning the judicial expansion from canteen stodge to selling general goods as well. Eager to avoid the trap of over-stocking, the display cabinet contains precisely three products — aspirin, notebook and black tights. The aspirin are clearly for prisoners, and the notebooks for reporters. Only on enquiry, however, do we learn that the tights are for judges. Apparently they have terrible trouble with ladders.

FOREIGN Office mandarins wandered into the loo at the Commons press gallery yesterday, and saw a large toilet paper dispenser bearing the maker's name Scott. "This shows the thoroughness," he said proudly, "with which the government smear campaign is being conducted."



Look forward in anger

Commentary
Hugo Young

WHAT Labour needs most from the Scott Report is not William Waldegrave's head on a plate. That might be appetising, but the meal would soon be over. The more essential outcome is a surge of rabid anger from voters discovering for the first time how, under the slimy stones, they are sometimes governed. Unless they wake up, Tony Blair's constitutional lecture last night, billed as a key text of New Labour's new politics, runs the risk of leading nowhere. He addresses popular despair with politics, which he said "touches the vitals of the nation". But the normal condition of Britain is that the despair is seldom great enough.

The Scott Report should do something to correct that. The coincidence of lecture and report is therefore favourable. Whatever else Scott achieves, he will supply a unique public guide to the private, secretive, double-

dealing world of unaccountable power which Whitehall created for the purpose of selling weaponry to Iraq. He will show just what ministers and officials are prepared to get up to and then either conceal or justify. He will lead many people to doubt not only whether present ministers were honest but whether the system, behind the screen of executive power, is any longer capable of integrity. If Mr Blair's new politics mean anything, they surely need to promise that this world will change. Politicians who have been in opposition so long, it is true, are liable to be innocent in such matters. Their open-eyed amazement may be genuine, but not necessarily durable. Whether Labour ministers, once grizzled by power, would be any more open and honest than Tories in supervising an arms industry that makes £5,000 million a year from exports is a question to which affirmative answers can't be guaranteed. But Scott will reveal a rotten bureaucracy, a corrupt political culture, a system so lacking in curbs on the arrogance of executive power that just about the entire Labour Party will line up behind the constitutional reforms to which the leader reaffirmed his commitment yesterday.

The project, however, faces obstacles which the party has hitherto not dimly recognised. Like some other aspects of Labour policy, the question whether the people really understand and agree with it is only now being raised in earnest. The gib listing of the old litany — Freedom of Information, Bill of Rights, Lords reform, Scottish and Welsh devolution — needs a new treatment to lift it beyond the realm of acquiescent chattering. For one can never say too often that in these matters, Britain is a terribly conservative country. The Tories' appeal to preserve the status quo, reiterated by the party chairman, may be dismal government but, outside Scotland, may not be bad politics. Nor, if Labour gets to power, can ministers rely on this change. Even a large majority will be vulnerable to the Tories' claim that obstructing reform with every weapon at their disposal is their sacred duty to the constitution.

In short, constitutional reform won't work if it can't muster more than public tolerance. Without a sense of despair, the mandate for change may soon seem flimsy. Nothing more deeply divides the parties than this stuff. It is the most naked battleground. Yet unless the case for reform can be made the vehicle of public anger, the battle may end in stalemate — is defeat for Mr Blair.

One source of failure could be in the detail. He could be

the most significant detail in the lecture was also the most glib, a reference to the need to reform the House of Commons. Detail, however, is not yet Mr Blair's point, and one can understand why. While constitutional reform is the cheapest of his three projects, it is far more perilous, because less judicable, than either the economic or the social. And the support he seeks for it comes from contradictory impulses. On the one hand, his lecture set forth a politics of consensus. Why, he asks, does a culture of adversarial shouting survive in a world that is now being raised sharply into the two old camps, socialist and liberal? Is it not time to consider that the answers to many modern problems might attract a level of popular support which the methods of the House of Commons entirely fail to reflect? Since the House of Commons is a management and social provision are now, when shorn of rhetoric, quite minimal, shouldn't the institutions of politics, based and central, be represented, more as agencies for getting things done than for the airing of manufactured hostilities? The public, he thinks, want this, and find Question Time the apotheosis of childish irrelevance. I agree with this case for more emolence. On the other hand, anger must precede it. The British have watched government being dismantled here their very eyes. For 16 years, they've seen quangos supplant accountable politicians. They've blithely put up with it. Even Scotland, grotesquely misrepresented, went back to sleep after 1982. This is what Blair wants to change, and his diagnosis of the problem is gaining substance. But first the complacency of the British, disease of ages, needs to be blown apart.

been done, and where local public demand is not in doubt, parliamentary obstruction could ride on the back of legitimate criticism if the specific proposals do not make sense. Quite rightly, Mr Blair took apart the preposterous Tory argument that an assembly with the power to raise taxes must by definition bring in a Tartan Tax. But he knows as well as anyone how devolution could yet wreck his programme: which is why

Code (superseded by a new code on January 1, 1996) which said civil servants "duties of confidentiality and loyalty twice to the Crown. Since constitutionally the Crown acts on the advice of ministers who are answerable for their departments in Parliament, these duties are for all practical purposes "duties of confidentiality and loyalty to the day." It is this duty of confidentiality, "for all practical purposes", which has inhibited civil servants from speaking out when they might have wished to defend themselves quite as vigorously as their ministerial masters have been able to do. The latest injustice to be meted out to individual civil servants who have given evidence to the Scott inquiry is that of being denied early access to the report. The document was delivered to government ministers yesterday. They will have eight days to read it, 1,800 pages, consider carefully what it says, take legal advice, discuss it with each other and take advice on handling the media. Parliament is to be notified of the findings of the inquiry. Civil servants who are the subject of criticism will have a mere six hours to prepare. The issue of natural justice still needs answering. How can it be fair and equitable that one group of people who stand to be criticised by the report have so much time to prepare, and another so little?

No doubt there will be those who on reading this will yet again cry "Whitehall conspiracy". To do so is to give a cheap and easy resort to the real issues about securing the just treatment of individual civil servants. Moreover, any suggestion that civil servants will be as free to defend themselves as ministers are is erroneous. Civil servants will be required to clear any statement in advance with their departmental legal adviser and with their head of establishment. Of course, no such statement can be made if it criticises government policy. It has always been unclear as to the course of action open to a civil servant who knows that a minister has sought to evade a ministerial responsibility by, for example, misleadingly either deliberately or unknowingly the House of Commons. That was the issue raised by the Westland affair, and is one of the major issues of debate in relation to Matrix Churchill. Let us hope Sir Richard has some answers.

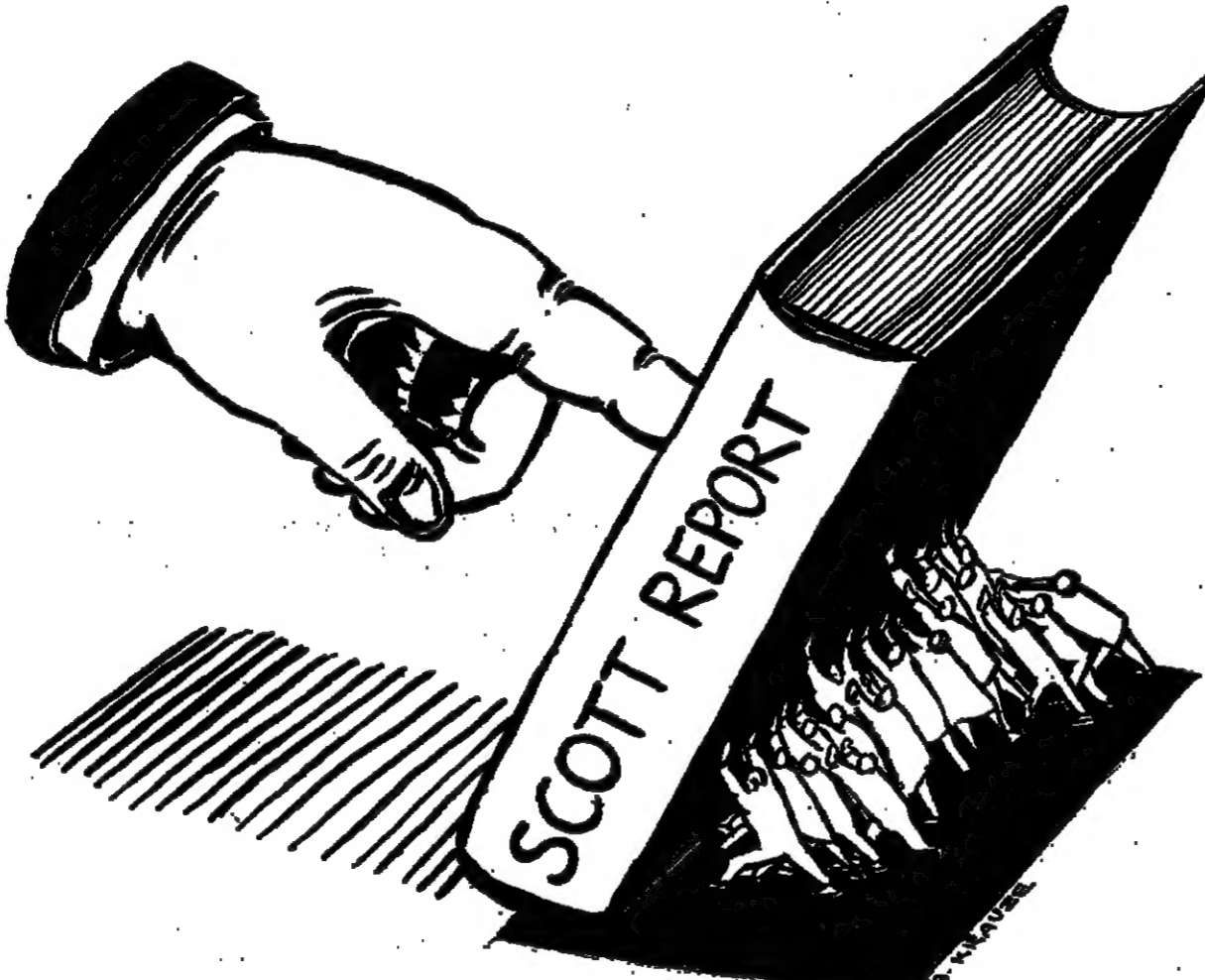
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Waiting in silence

Elizabeth Symons bemoans the unfair difference in the treatment of civil servants and their masters, and Michael White recalls previous government wriggles off hooks

THERE has been much talk in newspapers recently about an alleged Westminster/Whitehall "conspiracy" to undermine the findings of Sir Richard Scott's inquiry into the Matrix Churchill affair. The evidence adduced for the existence of such a conspiracy seems to be that a number of individuals believe that the inquiry has been conducted on a less than perfect basis. From the moment the inquiry

was set up, some newspapers were all too ready to see a conspiracy behind every public utterance, and to condemn ministers and civil servants in the same breath. The difficulties contingent upon the way in which the inquiry was set up were obvious from the beginning. In a letter dated December 23, 1992 to Lord Justice Scott — well before Lord Howe aired any of his concerns — the Association of First Division Civil Servants expressed anxiety

that many of the shortcomings which were identified in relation to the Clark inquiry into Critchell Down in 1984, and the Denning inquiry into the security implications of the Profumo affair in 1963, would arise again in respect of the inquiry into the Matrix Churchill affair. The report of the Royal Commission under the chairmanship of Lord Justice Salmon in 1986 said that the problems of dealing with such judicial inquiries were such that "if in the future there is a nationwide crisis of confidence about any matters of this kind, they should in our opinion be investigated before a tribunal brought under the Act of 1921". Such a tribunal was not established in respect of the Matrix Churchill inquiry, because it was thought that the process

would be too lengthy. Sir Richard himself, giving his first press interviews, said that he hoped to report within a matter of months. Sadly he was proved mistaken. Over three years later, the concerns we had in 1992 remain. Most importantly, those who may be the subject of criticism which may damage their reputation, ruin careers and ultimately lead to very public dismissal have not had the opportunity to cross-examine the evidence which has been brought against them. Leaks from the inquiry throughout 1995 prompted government ministers to take to the airwaves to defend themselves as robustly as they could. Civil servants, however, were not able to take such action. Civil servants remained

bound by the Civil Service

Whitewash by the gallon

NO WONDER that Opposition politicians are getting twitchy about the Scott Report as next week's publication day draws near. There have been too many occasions in the past — Westland and the Falklands to name but two — when governments which looked cornered by a damning and authoritative verdict have escaped the net. Scott ought to be a welcome symbol to Tony Blair and his allies of all that was short-sighted, sleazy and rainously counter-productive about the Thatcherites' realpolitik approach to Third World arms sales at the end of the cold war. We ended up selling arms to

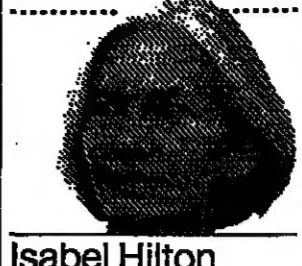
Iraq, not getting paid, and having to fight them. Hardly a triumph of honour, diplomacy or business acumen.

But older MPs remember what happened in 1982-83 when the veteran mandarin, Lord Franks, then 77, was wheeled out to stage an inquest on how exactly Margaret Thatcher's government blundered into the Falklands war. It went on to win at great cost. The bulk of his report was damning of assorted errors and misjudgments. But in his final three paragraphs Franks recognised political reality. Mrs Thatcher was a war heroine. "We would not be justified in attacking any criticism or blame to the present government for the Argentine junta's decision to commit its act of unprovoked aggression." It concluded. Those phrases were leaked to the Sunday papers the weekend before Franks reported. Bernard Ingham, her wily press secretary, further set the scene for "Franks Clears Maggie's headlines". In reality, as ex-premier Callaghan (who had thwarted an earlier invasion scare with no fuss or loss in 1977) noted, Franks had painted a splendid picture; then — in final paragraph 339 — "he got fed up with the canvas that he was painting and chucked

a bucket of whitewash over it". At least Lord Carrington's Foreign Office team had resigned when the 1982 invasion was confirmed. At least the Westland Gascoigne decision to sell to European or US helicopter firms in 1986 — smoked out Leon Brittan as well as Michael Heseltine. But Mrs Thatcher escaped, not least because Neil Kinnock's speech in the key debate missed an open goal. Already huge efforts are being made to minimise the damage from what Mr Major sees as his last awkward legacy from Mrs T. Backed by Douglas Hurd, Lord Howe (the Chancellor whose penny-pinching defence cuts in 1982 gave the junta its green light) has rubbished the Scott process, though it was their choice over the tribunal-of-

inquiry option, as Labour's Robin Cook keeps saying. Scott is naive and ignorant, they say. Ian Lang, the current trade secretary, has been deputised to handle the Commons statement, not Mr Major. Some Labour MPs fear "another Westland" if his Labour shadow, Margaret Beckett, lacks the detail to cope. She will not get much time. Ministers are invoking the need to avoid libel threats to justify not handing out advance texts of the 1,800-page report. Selective leaking between now and then may get ministers off media hooks and impale Tory MPs on the pre-election "unity" hook. In 1982 the Sun famously proclaimed "Gotcha". The Opposition would do well not even to think it can do the same.

Crown jewels are not for sale just yet



Isabel Hiltton

I HAVE always been sceptical about the peripheral social benefits claimed by organised sport. Its shortcomings are too obvious a tool, for instance, were brought home by the headline in a Scottish newspaper in 1978 that celebrated Scotland's qualification for the World Cup in Argentina. "Rio here we come!" it announced, in letters four inches high. But perhaps I shall have to reconsider: the sight of all that ruffled ermine on Tuesday at the House of Lords wound itself up to inflict defeat on the Government over the availability of sport on television was pretty arresting stuff. After 15 years of steady erosion of the accepted notion of public good, the nation has stirred.

During the last election campaign, Norma Major revealed that she had bought her husband a satellite-television dish for his birthday. So perhaps Mr Major, as one of the minority of British householders subscribing to satellite television, hadn't taken in the import of the broadcasting deals that threatened to remove the "crown jewels" of sport from terrestrial television. Sport on television bores me rigid. But yesterday's Lords debate did not. It is rare indeed that the upper house is moved to action on behalf of the lower orders. The most memorable mobilisation of the second chamber in recent years gave us the unedifying sight of a gaggle of undead peers descending from a convoy of taxis in 1988, to vote down the proposition that the poll tax should be charged according to ability to pay. As a rule of thumb, those absent peers seem to be meted out by the uplifting trump of class or party interest. But Tuesday's debate was different: as the Voice of Reason, Lord Wyatt, observed, it was a display of nationalism, or, as he high-mindedly put it, xenophobia. A media tycoon, a Johnny Foreigner at that, was proposing to deprive the nation of the right to its own rituals.

The curious thing is that this is hardly new. The Lords did not stir when the same tycoon acquired that national institution, the Times, or when satellite broadcasting was exempt from the rules limiting cross-media ownership. Nor did they seem to think it inapt that he should use his press to campaign against the BBC, in favour of the broadcasting free market.

Nor was it generally accepted that the "choice" offered by the market is, or necessarily an improvement on lack of choice: which parent would prefer the "choice" of three bad schools over the availability of one good one? And nor had it occurred to the Conservative Party, it seems, to be subsidised by the thought that a man whose newspapers speak to five million voters had to be treated as a friend of the party, that on this occasion it could lose votes by being nice to BSkyB. It took Lord Howe, a Labour peer, to point it out. Perhaps there is some point to sport on television after all.

ADVERTISEMENT
Labour & BR
Labour sat back and said rail privatisation wouldn't happen, yet £1.8 billion has been wasted and £800 million a year in public subsidy looms. Making franchises "publicly accountable" won't address the inherent inefficiencies of a fragmented system. Reintegration is inevitable. Labour has been asked to protect public funds by keeping its options open, including renationalisation without compensation. This does not require any policy or spending commitments. Though late in the day, the BR sell-off can be halted and reversed — whether Labour grasps the nettle now (which we would applaud) or not.
Suzon Forsey-Moore, Adviser
Action for Justice, PO Box 54, Cambridge CB5 8BB
Tel/Fax: 01223 327834 a4j.info@msunion.org
On May 25, 1995 in the Financial Times, Action for Justice first notified prospective investors in BR that they risked renationalisation without compensation as depriving the UK of an integrated rail system without the consent of the people was a wrongful act, undertaken without moral authority. The argument can be won in the court of public opinion with your support.
AAJ is an action, not a membership, group. A "no frills" operation (no rent, no salaries), we ask for one-off donations only. We thank the hundreds who responded to our December advertisements, your donations to help "tell truth to power" party funded this ad.
 Enclosed is a one-off donation of £ [cheque/PO made out to Action for Justice]
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ACTION for JUSTICE
the independent campaign for government accountability

Gianandrea Gavazzeni

Musical ride with excursions

FOR Gianandrea Gavazzeni, the Italian conductor who died aged 88, contrast was the essence of life. He was a solidly trained musician who dedicated a great deal of time to the study of subjects that had nothing to do with music...



Gavazzeni: vast repertoire

Gavazzeni was not so celebrated, internationally, as several other conductors of his generation but in Italy he was a cultural institution, respected and admired for musical and literary erudition...

my fist through a glass door," he recalled. "When people I know become general managers or artistic directors of opera companies, I send them my condolences, not my congratulations..."

arts bureaucracy (he once interrupted a concert, turned to the audience and demanded the resignation of the man who was then minister of entertainment), his attachment to his native country was total.

Gavazzeni's repertoire was vast but eccentric. He rarely conducted Beethoven and Brahms because he believed that he had little to contribute there; instead, he revived rarely played works by Schubert and Mendelssohn...

tion, and during the thirties Petrassi, Gavazzeni and the music historians Fedele D'Amico and Massimo Mila formed a convivial foursome that lasted until their deaths...

IN HIS student days he attended the first Roman performance of Schoenberg's Pierrot Lunaire, under the composer's direction, thereafter, he continued to follow the European avant garde attentively but remained unenthusiastic about it...

zetti and Mussorgsky, but most of his published volumes were collections of wide-ranging essays and diary entries that dealt with various aspects of music, the theatre (sung and spoken), Italian and French literature, painting and plain, everyday life.

His conversation was fascinating because his memory for detail was extraordinary; he could describe the sets of the first production of Turandot, which he had attended when he was 16, and he could tell you what you ate the last time you had supper with

him. Like most other theatre people, he loved to gossip, but, unusually, even his gossip usually turned out to be correct. At 82, he himself became a subject of talk when, after his first wife died, he married Denis Mazzola, a 38-year-old soprano he had recently met.

Harvey Sachs
Gianandrea Gavazzeni, conductor, born July 27, 1907; died February 5, 1996

Chubby Wise
Orange blossom specialist

CHUBBY WISE, who has died aged 80, was the fiddler with one of the most memorable bands in American vernacular music...

Wise's fiddling combined, said bluesgrass historian Bob Artis, "almost classical tone and sweetness of swing fiddle with the blues sound upon which Bill insisted, adding his own subtle soulfulness..."

Monroe was doubtful about hiring a player with so obvious a leaning to the jazzy western swing style, but Wise absorbed Monroe's concept of bluesgrass and worked with him for six years...

Burne Hogarth

A vine romance

BURNE HOGARTH, who has died aged 85, was the strip-cartoon artist who brought Edgar Rice Burroughs's Tarzan of the Apes back to new and dramatic life.



King of the swingers... a transformed Tarzan, right, as drawn by Burne Hogarth

His father, sensitive to his son's creative efforts, enrolled him, aged 12, at the Art Institute of Chicago, where on Saturday mornings he produced irreverent interpretations of classical art he had been given to copy.

1934. In 1935 he drew the pirate strip Pieces of Eight and a year later was given his first big break when Hal Foster left the Sunday Tarzan strip to start on a new character, Prince Valiant.

period, he experimented with other work, creating a strip entitled Drago and, in 1947, beginning his only humorous strip, Miracle Jones.

Leaving strips in 1947, Hogarth co-founded the School of Visual Arts in New York, still regarded as one of the leading centres for commercial and fine art training.

In the early seventies Hogarth returned to Tarzan and produced original pictorial versions of Tarzan of the Apes and Jungle Tales of Tarzan, resurrecting the king of the jungle in stunning and definitive form.

A simple epitaph for Hogarth would be his description of Tarzan: "Whilst he could be unswervingly staunch and firm on matters of principle, he was warm and compassionate about matters of immediate need."

Burne Hogarth, strip-cartoon artist, born December 25, 1911; died January 28, 1996



Birthdays

Mohammad Azharuddin, cricketer, 33; Prof Averil Cameron, historian of Byzantium, Warden, Keele College, Oxford, 56; David Daube, Regius Professor Emeritus of Civil Law, Oxford, 77; Qasim Zia, pianist, 58; Michael of the RAF Sir John Grandy, 83; Admiral of the Fleet Lord Hill-Norton, 81; Lady Elspeth Howe, chairman, Broadcasting Standards Council, 84; Lord Jakobovits, former Chief Rabbi, 75; Mack Lennan, actor, 71; Mogens Macdonald, former company secretary, the Post Office, 48; Sharman Macdonald, playwright, novelist, 45; Dr June Paterson-Brown, former chief commissioner, Girl Guides, 64; The Rev Dr John Tudor, superintendent minister, Westminster Central Hall, 58; John Williams, composer and conductor, 64.

Another Day

February 8 1953, Cincinnati: This morning on the radio I heard a discussion about the kind of government Christ would establish on earth. It sounded extraordinarily like the present American administration. It would be extremely righteous, democratic, but also controlling. It would control all the administrative offices of government, and would be directed by human agents who would resist all evil, which is on the increase all the time. Christ would remain invisible, like agents of the FBI. Stephen Spender, Journal, 1939-1963, Faber, 1965.

Tony Russell

Robert Russell "Chubby" Wise, musician, born October 2, 1915; died January 6, 1996

Death Notices

FARRER, Dr Barbara (nee), On Thursday February the 6th 1996, in her 80th year, Dorothy and Robert of 46, St Peter's College Cambridge. The deeply loved husband of the late Dr Robert Farrer (died 1985). Both devoted parents of David, Pauline (Polly), Hugh and Janet and adored by the world who sought and studied in the offices of government, and would be directed by human agents who would resist all evil, which is on the increase all the time. Christ would remain invisible, like agents of the FBI. Stephen Spender, Journal, 1939-1963, Faber, 1965.

In Memoriam

GAGE, Linda died suddenly on the day last year. She is greatly missed by Larry, her friend.

Birthdays

K. Barry I missed NY but Happy Birthday, Chubby.

Terry Monaghan

Mary Bruce, dance teacher, born August 25, 1900; died December 12, 1995

Mary Bruce

Dancing on mean streets

MARY BRUCE, who has died aged 95, taught street kids of Chicago's South Side and Harlem to dance — as well as stars like Marlon Brando, Katherine Dunham, and Dorothy Dandridge.

Bruce was born of African-American, Irish and Chinese descent in Mississippi but by 1909 her family had arrived in Chicago. A wealthy lawyer friend of the family funded her ballet school attendance, and by the age of 15 she was teaching. A combination of more friendly financial assistance and a forceful policy of offering free lessons to children in the South Side

resulted in the opening of her own "ballet dance". Her professional performances developed alongside the teaching, and Duke Ellington's assistant director, Andy Razaf, urged her to come to Harlem to work there, when her sister opened a rival dance school just a few doors away she left for New York.

Any regrets were soon forgotten, however, in her determination to establish herself. Bruce set up a new studio above the Baby Grand Club on the corner of St Nicholas Avenue and West 135th Street, where she taught for 50 years.

She scoured the neighbourhood for pupils but in doing so had to contend with street gangs, prompting her to enrol at Columbia University on psychology and Spanish courses. She soon got the best of "the enemy" — her Saturday morning classes were packed with boys, all eager to perform in her Starbuck troupe. She held annual performances at either Carnegie Hall or City Centre when

leading tap-dancers such as Bill "Bojangles" Robinson and "Hot" Coles were happy to guest her young dancers also performed at the Apollo and in special events like Mike Todd's Gay New Orleans Show at the 1939 World Fair.

Bruce developed a 100-acre site two hours upstate from Harlem at Mount Marion, as a summer school but though many honours came her way over the years the business contracted as she grew older and the school site was sold off to pay tax losses. In 1985 she was evicted from her studio by the landlord as property values rose in the area.

Her legacy can be seen in various film, TV and stage productions but her influence went further than that: "I was the great Mary Bruce who first made me proud I was a Negro," recalled her pupil Marie Bryant. Bruce gave her innumerable pupils the confidence to take pride in their identity and diverse ethnic backgrounds and so played a significant part in ensuring the survival of a major area of American culture.

Mary Bruce, dance teacher, born August 25, 1900; died December 12, 1995

Jackdaw



I TOOK my daily 30mg in the snappy candy-stripe green and white capsule. I lost the sense of time as a horrible oppressive go-slow emptiness, waiting to be FILLED with who-knows-what; time no longer felt always like Time. And time drifted by. And then... nothing.

inexorably zoning out into a kind of "neuter" effect. Pleasant enough, this feeling of being at the centre of a curiously whirlpool (kind of like white noise but without the noise), but was this why I had started taking it in the first place? To end up on a kind of heroin-without-the-kick(s)? The "neuter" field increased. Nothing continued to happen... big time.

I became the Nothing, nothing became me... Normally someone who dreams to an excessive degree, I stopped dreaming altogether. Thoughts of sex, and manifestations of sexual desire, disappeared altogether. Normally someone who listens to music an excessive amount, I stopped altogether. I stopped cooking. Stopped reading. What's more, I began to rationalise these signs of a disappearing world into a welcome overture: how pleasant, I thought, finally to be free of all these grasping demands on my pristine flesh.

being this nice new neutered, frozen, prone, Prozac me. Whole days went by where I literally sat in my Prozac Chair staring out the window. Sure, I no longer swung like an amphetamine-mimed ape between twitchy peaks, but was this really preferable? The cruel paradox: I began to manifest all the symptoms of chronic depression. I am not repeat NOT your suicidal type character: it is just not in my emotional makeup... But as my bright Prozac Indian summer turned into a dry effectless autumn, it got to the stage where I realised I was coldly considering — really, truly considering — suicide as an option.

I stopped taking it... In the words of a current pop song, I'm not so manic now. Maybe it's just that I've learned to love the unevenness of my life: even become grateful for its uneven texture, its seamlessness, its problematic unpredictability... I've learned to love the fact that I happily go from one extreme to another, from industrious asceticism to hedonistic blow-out.

I've learned to love emptiness and clamour, anguish and reward, the whole prismatic register of the daily spool. Ian Penman relates his experience with Prozac in Esquire.

Snogstastic
I'D REALLY like to snog my new boyfriend. The trouble is, I don't know what to do. I mean, does it involve tongues, or do you just kiss? Is it something you do on a walk in the country, or is it better in the back row at the cinema? Totally confused, London.

That's quite a lot of questions. The thing is, there aren't quite so many answers. One of the greatest, snogstastic advantages of the big smooch is that there are no rules. Just shut your eyes and go for it. Or open them if you prefer! Use your tongue if you feel like it, or keep it safe on home ground if you don't! Explore every nook and cranny of the inside and outside of his mouth, or if you'd rather, explore just his lips, gently and cautiously. It's your mouth, it's your boy.

friend and it's your choice. Everyone likes different things when it comes to snogging, but it's pretty much all pleasurable. You should just go with your feelings.

A bit rich
THE current debate rolling FEN American Center, the group that defends oppressed writers, is over whether or not rich people should be allowed to serve on its 96-member board of directors. This is, of course, one of the century's most urgent issues. Some FEN writers seemed concerned that a mere brush with wealth will contaminate them forever; and who can argue, as theirs is a delicate art, one that must be practiced in a world free from the danger of mere commerce.

Self-mutilation, fashion, and how to put a spell on boys.

Sugar... sweet talking
Sugar... sweet talking

be forced to confront their own prejudice, and arrogance. That, of course, can be a painful process, and we're glad that some FEN members would rather spare themselves and their colleagues such torture. Was a blow not struck for the rights of oppressed writers everywhere when, a few years back, FEN ostracised Gaybyrd Steinberg for having the audacity to organise... social events?

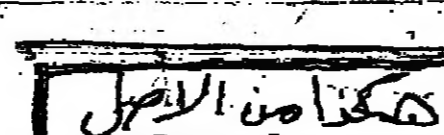
Of course, there are a few problems with cleaving art from equity. Some FEN members, Norman Mailer comes to mind, are themselves wealthy, perhaps even wealthier than a few of the itinerant capitalists who would like to join FEN's board. Perhaps FEN officials should demand that writers divest themselves of their portfolios before becoming members, much in the way that some clergymen must take a vow of poverty before trying on their stiff white collars. The New York Observer takes America's guardians of freedom of expression to task.

Church hotline

A telephone sex scandal has shaken the church authorities in Kongsvoerger in Norway. The telephones in the church office in Brandval have been used for long telephone conversations with Thailand, USA and the Philippines. It was an outrageously high bill from Telenor that caught the attention of the head of the church but he has not been able to get an explanation. The phones are accessible to the priest, the organist, the caretaker and the secretary. The question is whether it is the priest or the organist who is the culprit, since the secretary and the caretaker are women.

Jackdaw wants your jewels. E-mail jackdaw@guardian.co.uk; fax 0171-713 4866; Jackdaw, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER

Dan Glaister



Financial Editor: Alex Brummer
Telephone: 0171-239-9610
Fax: 0171-833-4456

Finance Guardian

Competition plans in disarray as leaked paper warns of unexpected consumer trend in favour of rivals

Rush to step off British Gas

Chris Barrie
PLANS to open up the gas market to competition in eight weeks' time are sliding towards chaos, as unexpectedly large numbers of customers prepare to deluge British Gas with requests to quit, an official briefing paper leaked to the Guardian warns.

This hemorrhaging of BG customers — 20 per cent in the region — will cause alarm at the company's trading division. British Gas would lose 4 million consumers if the same proportion of its customers quit once national competition starts in 1996.

Warning that the authorities will be blamed for any difficulties that arise, the briefing predicts that "the level of dissatisfaction and complaint will increase sharply" if severe problems arise.

Tory heartlands call the tune



Edited by Mark Milner

AFTER two quarter-point cuts in interest rates in as many months, expectations that a third was imminent were not high in the run-up to yesterday's regular monthly meeting between the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, and the Governor of the Bank of England, Eddie George.



As snow ploughs and gritters struggle in the blizzards, surveyor Ron Lightfoot (left) and his team at Britain's only rock salt mine are stretched to capacity to supply councils. The 700ft deep, 12km Union Salt Mine at Winsford, Cheshire, expects to produce 1.5 million tonnes of salt this year.

Telecoms firms square up for battle

Mark Tran in New York and Nicholas Bannister
THE jockeying for power in the lucrative global telecommunications market continued apace yesterday with multi-million-pound moves on both sides of the Atlantic.

Winchester says regulator has Chile copper deal 'concerns'

Don Atkinson, Patrick Donovan and Paul Murphy
WINCHESTER, the commodities trading group headed by £15 million-a-year Charles 'Copperfingers' Vincent, last night said City supervisors had raised "concerns" about a series of deals struck with the Chilean copper company, Codeco.

Little to gas about

THE demerger of British Gas was necessary to open the way for competition, Energy Minister Tim Eggar told the House of Commons on Monday.

Gehe bids for Lloyds Chemists

Ian King
ABIDDING war broke out yesterday for Lloyds Chemists, Britain's second biggest drugs retailer, after the German group Gehe, owner of the Hills Chemists chain, pounced with a £584 million cash offer.

Nothing like a Dame

Patrick Donovan City Editor
DA ME Pauline Neville-Jones wanted Paris. The Foreign Office offered Bonn, but she turned it down. So now the most formidable woman in the diplomatic service has plumped for the NatWest — after a spell advising on the Bosnian peace accord.

NEC deal with Groupe Bull puts Japan in PC big league

JAPAN yesterday stepped up its fight for a leading place among the world's personal computer makers against dominant American companies such as IBM, Apple, and Compaq, writes Nicholas Bannister.

NEC deal with Groupe Bull puts Japan in PC big league

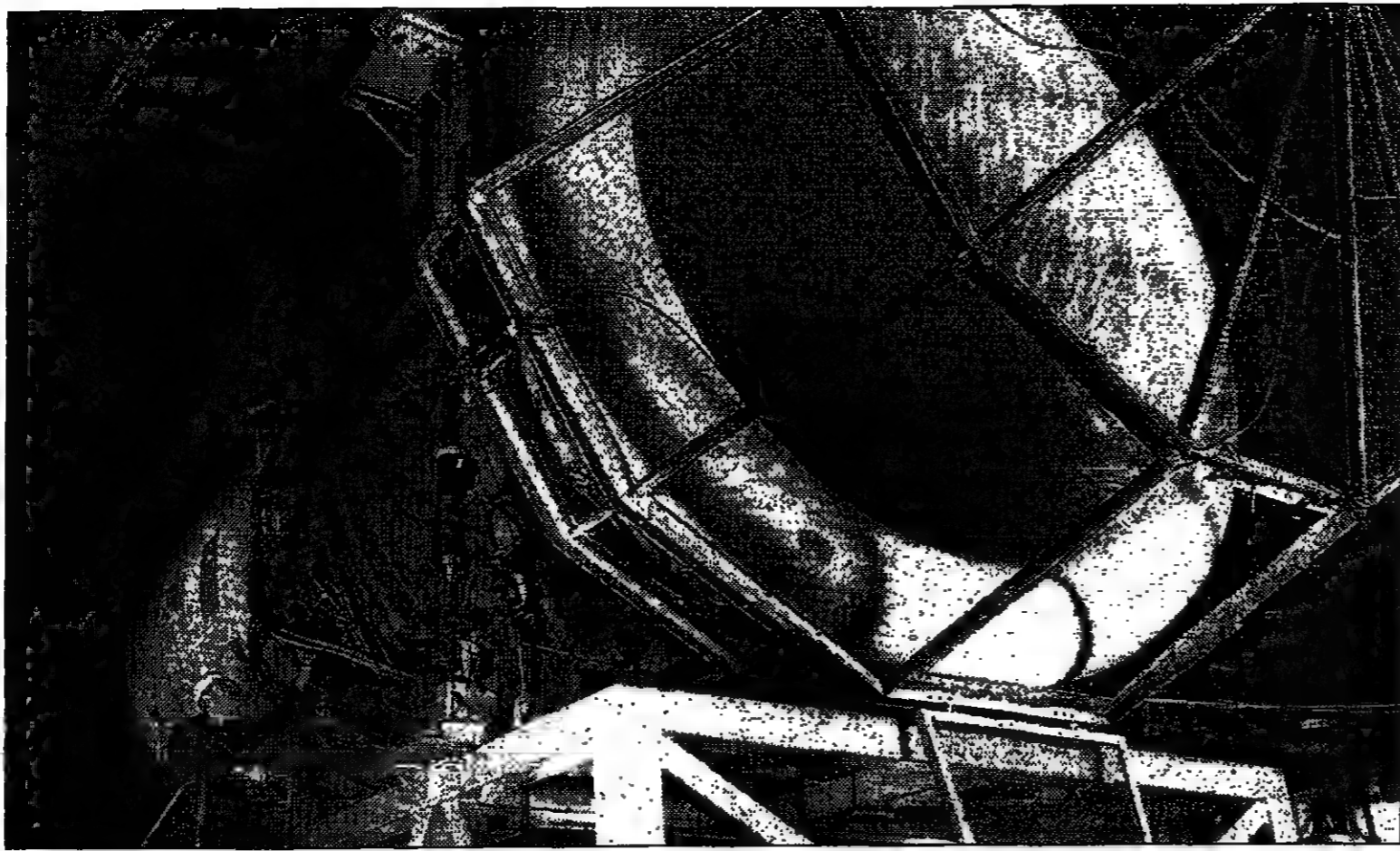
Bull that strengthens Packard Bell, the home computer maker in the United States, with 13 per cent of the market.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 1.88	France 7.54	Italy 2.360	Singapore 2.13
Austria 15.35	Germany 2.2100	Malta 0.5450	South Africa 5.43
Belgium 45.25	Greece 370.00	Netherlands 2.4800	Spain 185.50
Canada 2.05	Hong Kong 11.49	New Zealand 2.25	Sweden 10.89
Cyprus 0.71	India 89.07	Norway 8.88	Switzerland 1.725
Denmark 8.55	Ireland 0.9525	Portugal 230.00	Turkey 93.563
Finland 8.82	Israel 4.82	Saudi Arabia 5.71	USA 1.5025

Rolls clinches £97m sale of Trent engines in Singapore

ROLLS-ROYCE announced another breakthrough in the lucrative South-east Asian market for its Trent 800 aero-engine yesterday, with a \$150 million (£97.6 million) order from Singapore Aircraft Leasing Enterprise (Sale) for six Trent-powered Boeing 777s, writes Simon Beavis.



News in brief

Takeover chief warns PR firms

THE Takeover Panel chairman, Sir David Calcutt, last night warned financial public relations companies to be more careful in releasing information during bid situations.

Help for disabled cut

MORE than 7,500 disabled workers will be hit by the Government's decision to restrict its Access to Work scheme — which pays for equipment and workplace adaptation to allow people with disabilities to work on an equal footing with other employees.

Headlam floors rivals

HEADLAM, the Northampton-based distribution group, became Britain's biggest floor-coverings distributor yesterday after snapping up the rival carpet transporter Mercado for up to £1.1 million, and the Dutch furnishings distributor Malie for £9.7 million.

Japanese surplus slashed

JAPAN'S current account surplus, the broadest measure of trade in goods and services, fell by 14.3 per cent to \$110.44 billion (£72 billion) last year, its lowest level for four years, the finance ministry announced yesterday.

BAA increases profits

BAA said nine-month pre-tax profit, excluding one-time items, rose 11.4 per cent to £261 million as growing passenger traffic boosted the airport operator's retail sales.

Porsche agrees flexibility

PORSCHE, the German luxury sports car maker, said it had agreed to halt lay-offs until the end of 1997 in return for more flexible working practices.

Manufacturing hard hit in key marginals • Demand strong on Celtic fringe • No hint of rate cuts

Downturn targets Tories

Sarah Ryle

EVIDENCE that the key electoral battlegrounds are suffering most from the current economic slowdown emerged yesterday.

particularly in regions the Conservatives will need to capture to win a fifth term. A regional breakdown of a recent national survey of factory chiefs, published yesterday by the Confederation of British Industry and economic consultants Business Strategies Ltd (BSL), underlined the evidence of an overall flattening of demand.

those regions, with East Anglia, Yorkshire & Humberside and the North registering lowest on the scale. Demand was strongest at Britain's extremities which have traditionally proved relatively barren ground for Conservatives.

shire & Humberside, the North, the East Midlands, the South-east and North-west in the past four months. It strengthened in the South-west, Wales and the East Midlands.

Fears of German slump increase

Ian Traynor in Bonn

GERMANY could be heading into a slump despite government protestations to the contrary, a senior central banker said last night.

today, are tipped to reach a record level of 4.16 million, or well over 10 per cent. Yesterday the economics ministry reported that industrial orders in December were 5.1 per cent down on a year earlier, and as much as 5.5 per cent down in western Germany.

It may be too late for Aunt Maude

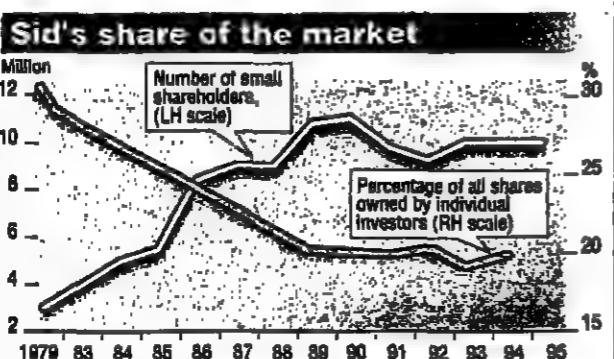
OUTLOOK/British Gas boss hit a nerve, writes Patrick Donovan

WHEN the definitive story of the 16-year experiment in privatisation is written, it may be an off-the-cuff remark from Richard Giordano, chairman of British Gas, which finally marks the collapse of the Conservative dream of wider share ownership.

drive to promote wider share ownership. And the comments come at a sensitive time for the Government, as efforts are made to repack the concept in the run-up to the General Election.

But look a little closer. More than 50 per cent of all private shareholders hold no more than two shares. Second, the overall number of investors has declined by a million to 10 million over the past four years.

But look a little closer. More than 50 per cent of all private shareholders hold no more than two shares. Second, the overall number of investors has declined by a million to 10 million over the past four years.



pany circulars. Every single one of British Gas's 1.8 million small shareholders can cost annually between £10 and £12.

are no longer interested in Sid, it is hard to see what can be done. Ministers will argue that Britain has a far higher proportion of investors than France, Germany, Japan and even the US.

Underside Dan Atkinson

DOWN-SIZING, the cure-all, bottom-kicking exercise prescribed ad nauseam for British workers by bank economists, is starting to devour its devotees.

APRES-SKI (1): If, during the next few days, the Treasury seems to have got the hump with the Bank of England, Howard Davies and Manchester City are to blame.

APRES-SKI (2): GLT is not a ghastly culinary innovation along the line of the BLT sandwich, but something even worse.

using a starting note would imply official approval.

BRIAN Scott, MD of Great Western Trains, celebrated Day One in the private sector with a mission statement: "Our commitment remains to the delivery of a consistent, safe and reliable service."



WITH debts of £2 billion, Peninsular & Oriental is seen by many City pundits to be going through a tight period, rhino-wise. But woe betide any who say so.

THE US Treasury investigation of the Shanghai Paper Chase foray, depicted in the 1947 thriller T-Men, could have been conducted in a much more civilised manner.

IN their determination to make the Guinness Book of Records, a group of Bulgarian musicians and actors is thought to be trying to raise £40,000 to stage a concert 18,000 feet up Mount Everest.

Advertisement for Eurostar train service. Text includes: 'NOW 19 EUROSTARS A DAY TO PARIS AND BRUSSELS. 0990 186 186 LONDON TO THE CENTRE OF PARIS AND BRUSSELS, DIRECT'.

Handwritten Arabic text at the bottom of the page.

The Guardian Thursday February 8 1996

Cricket
Umpire 'no' to Sri Lanka

STEVE DUNNE of New Zealand, one of the game's leading umpires, is set to join Australia and West Indies in refusing to take part in World Cup matches scheduled for Sri Lanka.



Black's white... a snow-covered Lord's makes a perfect backdrop for the umpire David Shepherd to show off the brand new black suit that he, and the other officials on the 12-man World Cup panel, will wear during the competition's night games.

Chingoka, said he intended to talk with his players, World Cup organisers, members of the ICC and the Sri Lankan authorities.

The president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India, Indrajit Bindra, said: "The Pilcom [Pakistan-Indo-Lanka Committee] decision is that the matches cannot be shifted without the concurrence of the Sri Lankan cricket board. The request to shift

the match out of Colombo has to come from Sri Lanka." The dispute between the Indian television company Doordarshan and the United States-based WorldTel has been settled, and with it the threat to live broadcasting of the World Cup.

Doordarshan had sued WorldTel after the American company, claiming it had not been paid, revoked its contract with the Indian state company and awarded the rights to Rupert Murdoch's Star Television. Doordarshan denied WorldTel's claim but has

now agreed to pay the outstanding 40 per cent of its \$4.75 million (£3.1 million) licence fee for the tournament rights and will allow the Hong Kong-based Star to handle international broadcasts while Doordarshan transmits to India.

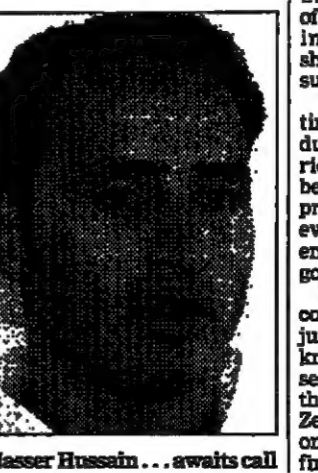
Smith goes down and maybe out

AN INJURY to Robin Smith that threatens to put him out of the World Cup has shone another spotlight on the administrative chaos blighting the tournament even before it has begun.

The batsman damaged his groin in taking a spectacular catch during England's 62-run win over a Lahore City XI in yesterday's practice match and may be out of action for a minimum of three weeks, which would rule him out of the competition. But doubt exists as to whether, under the tournament rules, a squad deprived of a player before a ball has been bowled is entitled to a replacement, and no clarification is likely to be forthcoming before the organising committee Pilcom gives a briefing in Calcutta on Sunday.

"We wrote to the organisers on this subject before we left home last week but did not receive a specific answer," the chairman of selectors Raymond Illingworth said in Lahore yesterday. "They said they would tell us the position on replacements at the opening ceremony."

Although the organisers seem to be making up the rules as they go along, common sense suggests that in such situations consent would be given. But if the passage of events so far is anything to go by — with teams ignoring ridiculously premature demands for squad



Nasser Hussain... awaits call

names, and the continued uncertainty about itineraries and venues and even whether they will take place at all — common sense is in short supply. Rarely can a sporting event have been anticipated with such foreboding.

Mark Ramprakash and Nasser Hussain would appear to be candidates should a replacement be required, although it is possible that the organisers would insist on Ramprakash because he and not Hussain was named in England's preliminary list of 18 players.

Smith, 32 years old and almost certainly at his last World Cup, retreated to the team hotel after sprinting 20 yards and diving full-length at deep midwicket to catch the former Pakistan Test player Manzoor Elahi. "I felt it as I dived and that's when I must have pulled the muscle," he said. "At this stage I feel very stiff and very sore."

The extent of the injury will not be known until today at the earliest and possibly not until the weekend, after rest, anti-inflammatory drugs and ice treatment.

This probably represents Smith's last chance to shine in the most significant competition in the game. "I feel very depressed," he admitted last night. "I'm very, very low. This World Cup means everything to me."

Some feel Smith had been fortunate to gain a place in the squad. He missed a place in the last World Cup final in Melbourne because of a back injury, and in the past couple of years has suffered loss of international form and a shoulder injury that required surgery last winter.

"From the vibes I was getting from the management during the tour of South Africa I felt it was quite lucky to be here," he said. "I wanted to prove people wrong and show everyone I was still good enough to play and do a very good job."

Even with a quick recovery, however, the latest injury may have sounded the knell to his qualifications. He seems unlikely to be fit for the first match, against New Zealand next Wednesday, and once out of the team he might find it difficult to get back in.

Boxing
Patterson battles for ex-fighters

Jack Nassarick
LAVISH with money and trusting with business associates, successful fighters rarely retire in comfort. A number of them become physically or mentally handicapped, and some die penniless.

Floyd Patterson intends to do something about this. "What I want to do is see to it that when a fighter retires, whether he makes it to the top or not, that he has something," the former world heavyweight champion said yesterday in his new role as

chairman of the New York State Athletic Commission. "In my whole career I made \$12 million," he said. "Mike Tyson recently made \$22 million (\$24 million) for one fight. A fighter should be able to put some of it away so that when he retires he doesn't have to walk the streets."

The great Joe Louis, owing millions in back taxes, did not walk the streets but ended his life as a "greeter" at Las Vegas casinos, a gesture from gambling bosses who had won fortunes on his fights.

Wilfred Benitez, still only 37, held light-welterweight and super-welterweight titles but is now brain-damaged and penniless, having gambled away some \$10 million.

Patterson also promised to support two bills in the state legislature aimed at outlawing bare-knuckle fights. Liverpool's Richie Wenton is set to challenge Vincenzo Belcastro of Italy this spring for the European super-bantamweight title. Wenton, who outpointed Scotland's Wilson Docherty this week to win a Lonsdale belt outright, became British champion in tragic circumstances in 1994 when his opponent, the Londoner Bradley Stone, died after the fight.

Racing
Triumph is the ploy with Bob

Ron Cox
FIVE weeks today the final day of the Cheltenham Festival will kick off with arguably the toughest race of all for punters to back at the great meeting when a huge field of four-year-olds do battle for the Daily Express Triumph Hurdle.

Already a handful of ante-post favourites have come and gone, but time is running out for anything to challenge Zabadi, the \$1 market leader with Coral's after his easy win at Kempton.

As soon as the weather relents, however, expect to see some fresh names burst on the scene. It is a pity that tomorrow's meeting at Newbury is likely to be frozen off, for the Stroud Green Hurdle could have resulted in a significant shake-up in the Triumph market.

Mark Tompkins, the Newmarket trainer, had hoped to introduce Bob's Play against the likes of Paddy's Return, Our Kris and Danjing.

A useful middle distance handicapper when trained by Reg Akehurst last flat season, Bob's Play has shown a real talent for jumping hurdles on the schooling grounds at Newmarket.

"It's true that Mark is pleased with him," said Phil Green, spokesperson for the Tompkins stable yesterday. "The Triumph is the aim, but the weather has been against us."

Lingfield all-weather Flat card with form guide

Table with racing results and form guides for Lingfield all-weather Flat card. Includes race numbers, names of horses, and their performance details.

Bright spell for Camacho

JULIE CAMACHO is hoping her father Maurice goes away on holiday more often. Since the Malton trainer left for the summer climes of the Philippines last Sunday, the yard has had three winners from four runners.

Mark Tompkins, the Newmarket trainer, had hoped to introduce Bob's Play against the likes of Paddy's Return, Our Kris and Danjing.

Charnock had Kingdom Princess in control after two furlongs of the Avon Handicap and the three-year-old stayed on in determined style to see off Myrtles Mistake by two and a half lengths.

Hopes rise for Ayr on Saturday

AYR on Saturday holds out the best prospect of a return to turf racing, Mark Kershaw, the general manager, was optimistic after consulting with the Met Office yesterday.

Catterick also anticipates milder conditions before Saturday, but the outlook is bleak elsewhere. Today's Wincanton and Huntingdon cards were called off yesterday, along with Bangor tomorrow.

Results

Table with racing results for various tracks including Southwell, Kempton, and Lingfield. Lists race numbers, horse names, and winners.

Advertisement for RACELINE Full Results Service, featuring a phone number (0891-168-168) and a logo with a horse and jockey.

Soccer

Keegan denies split

Ian Ross

KEVIN KEEGAN poured oil on seemingly turbulent waters yesterday by insisting that he and the Newcastle board had not differed on the question of Faustino Asprilla.

With Asprilla's transfer from Parma now all but sealed, Keegan felt sufficiently confident to discuss publicly the Colombian international's attributes. Indeed he said of the striker: "We are not going to find anyone as good as him, or so right for us."

Keegan dismissed the suggestion that certain influential directors had attempted to scupper a deal which has hung in the balance on countless occasions since first mooted last month.

"I don't want anyone to think I have stuck out against other people's wishes," he said. "They [the board] know I want him and I never wavered from that even when there were problems."

Keegan believes he has lured to England a player of impeccable pedigree. "It's just my opinion but I would rate him among the top five in the world," he said. "The crowd will love him. He's a match-winner, a goalscorer and an entertainer. He is the sort of footballer that Geordies love."

"It all depends on how he adjusts to English football, of course, but he sounds very excited and he wants to play here."

"A lot of rubbish has been written about the lad, much of which I found to be in bad taste. If I had signed players on the basis of what I heard about them, David Ginola and Andy Cole would not have come to this club and the fans would have missed some great players."

Liverpool are the latest club to express interest in the new prodigy of Swedish football, according to English football. The 16-year-old youth international goalkeeper may be invited to a trial at Anfield.

Marc Rötter is expected to make his debut for Everton in Saturday's home game with Manchester City, three weeks after completing his £700,000 move from Newcastle. The Swiss international full-back is expected to receive his work permit today.

Birmingham yesterday reasserted their interest in Everton's out-of-favour midfielder Vinnie Samways, two weeks after a £1.3 million deal collapsed because of a dispute over personal terms.

Another midfielder, Sheffield Wednesday's John Sheridan, is stilling over a month's loan to Birmingham with a view to a permanent £200,000 move from Newcastle. The 16-year-old youth international goalkeeper may be invited to a trial at Anfield.

Gary Ablett has signed a new contract which will keep him at Goodison Park for the next 2½ years.

Swansea pick an unknown

Russell Thomas

SWANSEA's new chairman Michael Thomas recruited Kevin Cullis, who has never played for or managed a League team, as the troubled Welsh club's fourth manager this season.

Cullis, 37, is virtually unknown outside non-League soccer, but his career has been followed by Thompson, the Birmingham businessman who took over Swansea 12 days ago.

The new manager played extensively in the Midlands before taking Gornal Sports to the West Midlands League championship. Since 1992 he has been in charge of Cradley Town's youth team.

Cullis insists that the step up holds no fears for him. "Somebody has to steer the ship and I feel I am quite capable of doing that. If I wasn't I feel sure the chairman would not have appointed me."

Sport in brief

Hockey Southgate have been allocated £225,000 by the National Lottery Sports Fund, the largest award yet to a hockey club, writes Pat Rowley.

The grant will go towards a £980,000 joint project by Southgate and Middebury University to lay two artificial and three turf pitches and provide a new pavilion on the university's campus at Trent Park. The new facility, planned for mid-1997, will be for the use of the club, university and local community.

Southgate are the fourth hockey club, after Desdise Ramblers, Guildford and



Leading men... the captain Chris Gray (left) with Roger Whittaker, John Drapkin and Nottingham's chairman Alan Bragg

Richmond this week found a wealthy backer to help their drive towards League Two, but other English clubs are struggling in the new professional era. Jill Turner visits Nottingham, who have advertised their plight

Beeston boys feel the pinch

IMPOVERISHED but talented rugby union club needs millionaire. It sounds like a joke but Nottingham RFC are not laughing.

Richmond may have found their wealthy backer this week but Nottingham, a cash-strapped club, are worried. So worried that they placed the above advertisement in a national newspaper.

"We need a millionaire, we really do," said their president John Drapkin, shaking his head over the club accounts. "We just don't know what is going to happen, which is a tragedy for a wonderful club like ours."

A decade ago Nottingham — who, weather permitting, face Gloucester in a Pilkington Cup tie at Beeston on Saturday — were one of England's foremost clubs. In the 1985-86 season they were second only to Gloucester in the John Smith's Merit Table, above the likes of Bath, Leicester and Harlequins.

When the Courage league began a year later they sat proudly in the First Division until slipping to relegation by the end of the 1991-92 season.

This was largely a result of losing their charismatic coach Alan Davies to the Welsh national squad and, because they believed his move was temporary, failing to provide a secure replacement. Without him the club lost momentum. Rob Andrew, Brian

Moore, Dusty Hare and Chris Oti all won caps while playing for Nottingham but the club's current stalwarts Gary Rees and Simon Hodgkinson and the Scottish-born captain Chris Gray have not represented their countries since the beginning of the decade.

The club fell into major financial difficulties, lost an important sponsorship and half its gate and by the end of the 1993-94 season were in

richer League Two clubs such as Northampton and Newcastle Gosforth. Nottingham have called in a firm of marketing consultants run by Bob Britten, a former Nottingham Forest soccer player and commercial manager at Southampton FC, and placed the ad for a fairy godmother.

"It would have taken time," said Drapkin, "but we could have dug ourselves out. Now the situation has changed. Six

Our little hospitality suites in Portakabins are not really going to make the grade.

Under the aegis of the small and elderly railway-side clubhouse on Ireland Avenue, decorated with shirts from around the world and photographs of past players performing in international arenas, the talk is of the future and what might be.

The director of rugby, Roger Whittaker, said: "The

Gray, a 35-year-old lock, is all too aware of the troubles.

"We have been fighting against money and it is a difficult one to win," said the club captain. "It's tough on players' loyalty when they can see another club providing great training facilities, better mileage costs, good kit and the rest. You build a team on the field but all these things help, they help a lot."

Drapkin mused: "The worst scenario for us is relegation again. A lot of the Third Division clubs are very hungry and we could even find it hard to stay with them. It's all very hard to take."

"The First Division will get the lion's share of sponsorship but we are hoping some will filter down to our ranks. That should enable us to retain the players we have and hopefully fill a few gaps. But we will have to relinquish control — either to a benefactor or a syndicate or by following Saracens and becoming a public limited company."

"We don't want to lose control over the club but that's the way it has to be. When a club like Rugby, at the core of the sport's history, was forced into liquidation you realise how very serious the situation can be."

It is ironic that the club's mascot is a local hero, Robin Hood, the man who robbed the rich to give to the poor. Nottingham could do with him now.



'We don't know what is going to happen... a tragedy for a wonderful club'

trouble to the tune of nearly £20,000.

Without the advent of professionalism Nottingham probably could have ridden the storm with £4,000 of financial help from the Rugby Football Union. But now this loan is about as effective as a sticking plaster on a broken limb. Rugby's new world demands payment for players and coaches, top-level facilities for spectators, marketing and administrative staff, and money, money, money.

Already struggling against

months or so ago we would be looking for maybe £50,000 by way of a cash injection. Today you can add a nought to that.

"It's not only payment for players, which we are still trying to work out, but all the things that come with that. We want to be part of the professional circuit and you cannot have a professional or semi-professional organisation run on an amateur basis. Club staff and administrators have to be paid, and to attract investors we have to offer better facilities than we have at present."

best players, the best coaches will focus on the places that have the money to buy them and it is this that will form the structure of the game in the future. Look at soccer, who would have said five years ago that Blackburn Rovers would become one of the biggest clubs in the country?

"Now we are in a ball game in rugby where it is backing and finance that will bring a club to the fore, and Newcastle is going to be the example."

Rugby League

Newcastle eye Offiah

John Huxley

FIVE rugby union clubs including Sir John Hall's Newcastle have made approaches to lure Martin Offiah back to the code he played at Rosslyn Park.

In announcing the clubs' interest in the 29-year-old Great Britain and Wigan winger, who finished last season's try-scoring in the Centenary Championship, his agent Alan McColm said yesterday: "I have discussed [with Wigan] the idea of Martin playing a short-term contract in rugby union [but] we have not talked to them about any specific offer."

"The Wigan chairman Jack Robinson said he was in favour of Martin playing union but would listen to any proposals we may put."

McColm added: "Martin is not considering a career change and I don't believe he could earn the same kind of contract rewards he enjoys at the moment anywhere other than Wigan."

The exodus of talent from Leeds is set to continue, with their former All Black centre Craig James leaving for the Sydney club Manly-Warringah even though he has two years of his contract to run at Headingley.

Leeds, who lost their hooker James Lowe to Bradford Bulls last week and put their Kiwi forward Gary Mercer up for sale on Tuesday, are resigned to seeing Imes go, now that they have obtained his undertaking to stay for the remainder of their Challenge Cup campaign: they face Warrington in the fifth round on Saturday.

The team manager Hugh McGahan's insistence that Leeds should have compensation from Manly because of that contract rings hollow, as Manly are an Australian Rugby League club. Leeds are now part of Rupert Murdoch's Super League, whose parent body has just had a lengthy court battle with the ARL in Sydney, and arbitration channels between the two bodies simply do not exist.

Imes could soon find himself up against a former Leeds loose forward in Killery Hanley, who has signed as a player and development coach with the Sydney Tigers for the 1996 ARL season which starts on March 1. The former Great Britain captain and coach played for the club back in 1988 when they were known as the Balmalm Tigers, Doncaster Dragons, who "guested" in the last Second

Snooker

Marathon man McManus is first to tape

Clive Everton

PONNIE O'SULLIVAN reached his quarter-final destination at the expense of Nigel Bond in only 1hr 54min. Alan McManus was acclaimed for 4hr 30min yesterday before he was ousted by the late arrival of the Benson and Hedges Masters at the Wembley Conference Centre with a 6-5 win over Matthew Stevens.

McManus, sixth in the world rankings, has reached two semi-finals this season but is suffering a crisis of confidence.

The green-to-black clearance with which he took the opening frame on the black remained his highest break until he was 4-1 down, making all sorts of mistakes with his mind apparently in a fog.

There was some improvement — and a 36 break — as he reduced that to 2-4 and he opened the seventh promisingly with 51.

Stevens, an 18-year-old Welshman, nevertheless had a chance to lead 5-2 but failed to complete the necessary clearance with the last few balls at his mercy.

McManus comfortably levelled at 4-4 but bungled a safety on the yellow in the ninth only to be presented with a 5-4 lead when Stevens failed at the slightly awkward decisive black.

Stevens won the 10th by a distance but McManus went into the lead with 37 in the decider and held on to earn a quarter-final against Steve Davis.

Rugby Union

RFU takes watch out of referee's hand

Robert Armstrong

TRICKENHAM has decided to emulate professional rugby league by enlisting timekeepers and klaxons in the cause of fair play and spectator-friendly rugby.

But the Bath secretary John Quin warned last night that the Rugby Football Union's plan to increase playing time could be undermined by practical jokers who bring their own klaxons into the ground.

Initially timekeepers will be used only at Courage League One games starting on Saturday week, but next season they may become a standard throughout the national leagues. The experiment will be reviewed by the RFU referee sub-committee at the end of this season, when data relating to injury time, time-wasting and slow goalkicking will be considered.

The job of timekeeper will be carried out by an RFU assessor, allowing the referee to concentrate on the running of the game. A stop-watch and klaxon have been delivered to each League One club.

However, Quin believes a more distinctive-sounding klaxon may be needed. "The klaxon used at rugby league clubs is harder to imitate and to acquire than the one the RFU have sent us, which is a simple affair powered by a gas cylinder," he said. "I'm in favour of timekeeping in principle but there could be a problem making it work."

After the klaxon sounds, the referee will only blow his whistle for half-time or to end the game when the ball has run dead. If the ball becomes dead as the result of a try the referee will allow the conversion kick to be taken. If the ball runs dead as the result of a

mark, free-kick or penalty kick the referee will allow play to continue until the ball next becomes dead.

When the game stops because of injury the watch will be stopped. It will also be stopped 30 seconds after a player has indicated his intention to kick at goal and restarted when the player kicks the ball.

Timekeepers will also keep the actual running time of the game, using a second timepiece.

Bath intend to hold their historic rugby union fixture against Wigan at Cardiff Arms Park on May 25 after being told they may not play the game at Twickenham. The Welsh Rugby Union, keen to generate extra revenue from the national stadium, is expected to give the two English clubs the go-ahead by the end of this week.

The RFU's secretary, rejected Bath's request because plans are in hand to re-seed the Twickenham pitch late in May. He is also concerned about the unseasonal disturbance a high-profile match would cause to local residents in the early summer. "We already have an extra match at Twickenham in April, when Leicester are due to play a world XV," he said.

Bath will not give up on the RFU's executive committee has made a formal decision on the matter, though their supporters might in any case prefer the shorter, cheaper journey to Cardiff. Wigan, who have provisionally arranged to hold the rugby league game against Bath at Maine Road on May 8, are happy to play the union fixture at the suitable ground in the north of the city, Wembley, which their supporters already have the opportunity of visiting once a year.

Welsh threat over ruling

David Plummer

WALES will press for disciplinary action against England by the International Board unless the Rugby Football Union abides by the contentious new rule which stipulates that any player moving between unions must serve a 180-day residential qualification period.

The measure was endorsed at the IB meeting in London last month. But the RFU believes European Union law would prevent any European union from implementing the rule and has threatened to ignore it.

Vernon Pugh, chairman of the Welsh Rugby Union and of the IB, has warned that if the RFU does not comply it will face disciplinary action from the Board, which can impose a wide range of punishments, including a fine, suspension or even expulsion.

This week the RFU gave permission for Nick Poppell, the Irish international prop, to play for Newcastle Gosforth in the Pilkington Cup this Saturday even though he has been living in Dublin this season. The RFU argued that Poppell's previous registration with Wasps made his nationality irrelevant to a move between English clubs.

The IB has set up a disciplinary committee of five to hear any complaints made by unions or associations about one another's behaviour, and Pugh said the WRU would not hesitate to invoke a disciplinary hearing if a Wales squad player signed for an English club and was not required to serve the 180-day residential qualification.

"The RFU would face disciplinary measures, all the more so because of its undertaking to abide by all the resolutions made by the Board," said Pugh. "Just because the IB has lacked teeth in the past does not mean it will do so in the future. The whole point of the last meeting was not just to reduce the rules and regulations of the board but to build an apparatus which would ensure that they were observed by all."

"The RFU has consistently said it is worried about the influx of players across its borders, but it now appears to be encouraging them by saying the 180-day rule is contrary to European law. That is a matter of opinion, one which I do not share."

Pugh added: "We need a strong club structure in Wales to become successful at international level again. As a union we will do all we can to ensure our clubs hold on to their leading players — not that some of the contracts offered by English teams to all they are cracked up to be."

The IB regulation applies to players under contract to a club or union, and the WRU met its squad players yesterday to try to persuade them to sign contracts they have been considering for more than a month. Sticking points include promotional rights and endorsements.

Wales's new scrum-half Robert Howley has rejected a move to England with Saracens and will stay with Bridgend until the end of next season. The WRU, Howley's employer Ogwr borough council, and Bridgend have put together a package worth about £50,000 to keep him in Welsh rugby.

No changes for Scotland

SCOTLAND, halfway to a Grand Slam, have announced an unchanged side for the Five Nations Championship match against Wales in Cardiff on Saturday week.

Their manager Jim Telfer, who criticised his team for easing off during last week-end's win over France at Murrayfield, said: "We are treating the game in Cardiff as a semi-final. Everyone hates to lose in a semi-final."

SCOTLAND: R Shepherd (Midlothian), G Jelner (Midlothian), S Hastie (Walsingham), J Christie (Dumfries), M Dods (Northampton), G Townsend (Northampton), S Redpath (Midlothian), D Wilson (Leeds), K MacLennan (Dumfries), P Wright (Boroughmuir), S Campbell (Dumfries), D West (Midlothian), R MacLennan (West), J Stewart (Co. Wick), E Peters (Leeds), I Smith (Glasgow), R MacLennan (Midlothian), Co. C Chalmers (Midlothian), G Armstrong (Newcastle), S Murray (Edinburgh Acad.), S Burnett (London Scottish), J Hay (Dumfries).

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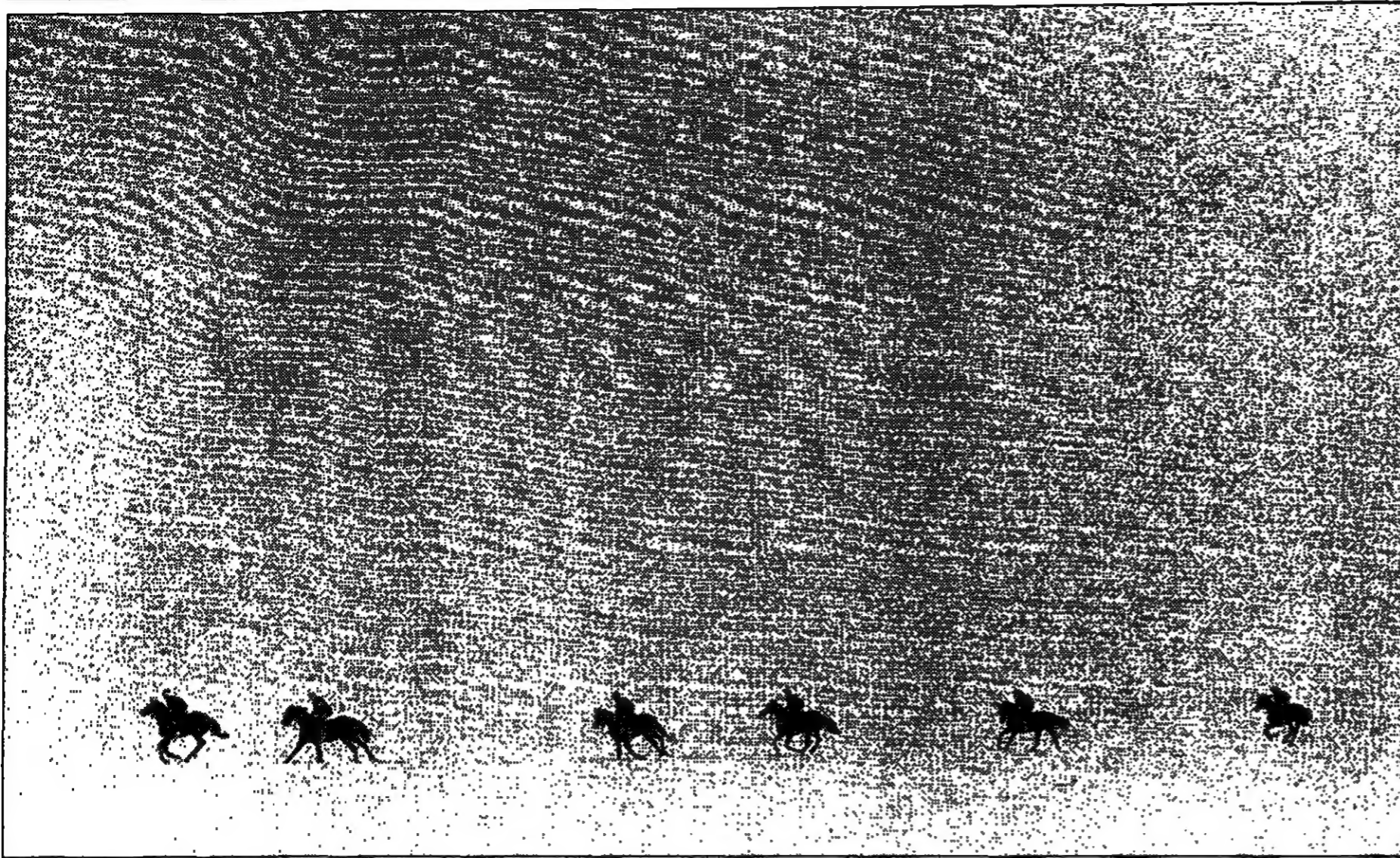
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Snow mobile... horses from the trainer Mark Johnson's stable gallop over the frozen landscape of Middleham Moor in North Yorkshire

PHOTOGRAPH MICHAEL STEELE

Take a letter to Virginia Bottomley



Vincent Hanna

DEAR Virginia, I hope you are well. It was such good news about Peter's new seat. For long summer weekends. I think, I think, is marginally better than Eltham. Look, I hope you don't mind me bringing up the Broadcasting Bill. You must be upset after Tuesday's humiliation. But cheer up, things could be worse — not much, I grant you — and you might have been in the Scott report. I know you thought the job of Heritage Secretary would be fun: handing over Lottery money to charity, lots of jolly evenings at the opera. How could you possibly guess that you'd be mugged in a state retirement home by a bunch of geriatric sports fans.

wants the eight events (why such a meagre list is called the Crown Jewels beats me) available on TV for free. The sporting bodies want lots of money. Oh yes, and everyone wants to take a dig at Rupert Murdoch.

A word of advice: talk to Michael Lee. He is your opposite number in the Australian government. Yes, I know he's in the Labour Party, but trust me, he can help you. He has to live cheek-by-jowl with Murdoch, and Packer.

He deals with terrestrial and satellite channels. And he has a Broadcasting Act that works. Since 1982 Michael has had the power to list events which in his opinion should be available free to the public. He's no wimp, he has listed 41 of them including all matches played by the Australian netball team and every round of the British Open.

But the real stinger is that he has discretion to remove or exempt any event from the Act provided he is satisfied that (a) there has been fair and open commercial competition for broadcasting rights; and (b) none of the terrestrial channels has acquired them within a reasonable time.

AND there's another thing. In making his decisions he can take into account what has happened to the edited highlights, or the radio coverage.

Let's be positive, there's still time (just) for you to get something out of this and to help sport as well. It just needs a bit of lateral thinking.

Tuesday's winning amendment makes no sense, but then neither did the terms of David Mallor's 1990 Act. The amendment simply tells the Independent Television Commission (ITC) to "do all that they [sic] can" to ensure that live TV coverage of any of the eight "listed" events is not reserved exclusively for satellite TV. It is drafted like one of Sam Goldwyn's verbal agreements — not worth the paper it's written on.

You can hear the phone call now: "TTC here, sorry Minister, we did all that we could, but the FA say they need the money, and anyway the BBC won't talk to us; we've no jurisdiction over them."

OF COURSE there's more to it than that. As shots across the bow go, this was a cracker. And unless you can come up with something new and shiny by the time the Bill gets to the Commons, other more nasty things may be written into it.

The snag is that several things have become jumbled up in the Bill. The public

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Euro hope for 10 English clubs

Martin Thorpe in Geneva on Uefa's revolutionary plans which could see a bumper crop of clubs competing abroad next season

UEFA yesterday announced revolutionary proposals which could see 10 English clubs playing in Europe next season and 15 in 1997-98. Under the plan, two English clubs would automatically compete in the European Cup and two in the Cup Winners' Cup.

The far-reaching changes are designed to give Europe's top clubs more money-making ties in order to head off any thoughts of those clubs breaking away to set up their own lucrative competitions.

Uefa revealed the changes to clubs from Europe's top 15 countries at a summit here yesterday. The ideas were broadly welcomed by the 33

clubs present — including Manchester United, Arsenal and Liverpool — and they will now be fine-tuned by Uefa's competitions committee ready for an announcement of the exact plans and qualification criteria in March.

"We welcome this totally and will be pushing to have the changes in place for next season," said the United director Maurice Watkins. And Uefa's president Lennart Johansson did not rule that out: "We want to do it as soon as possible."

On top of the main proposals, Uefa is also suggesting that teams knocked out of the preliminary round of the European Cup should then drop into that season's Uefa Cup, which is being expanded to 119

clubs, almost certainly from next season, with the Premiership receiving at least two additional Uefa Cup qualification places and possibly three in a preliminary round that would be played over two legs on July 24 and 31. Scotland would have one extra Uefa Cup place but nothing more under these proposals.

Uefa's main plan on the European Cup proposes that the current 24 national league champions in this most lucrative of competitions be joined by eight other clubs. These would comprise one each from the top eight countries in the European rankings, including England but not Scotland, who are not in the top eight.

The eight clubs would be chosen on merit, based on their current league positions and their league records over the previous 10 or the previous five years, a factor yet to be decided. If Newcastle win the title this season, for instance, the extra place would be likely to go to Manchester United on their record over the past five years, but possibly to Liverpool if judged over the past 10.

The eight would join the preliminary round of the European Cup, fighting for a place in the 16-team Champions' League. Uefa's other big plan is for the top eight countries in the rankings to be given two places in the Cup Winners' Cup as well. This competition would comprise the national cup winners plus another team, most likely chosen on their recent past record in that domestic cup and in Europe. On these criteria, Arsenal would join the FA Cup winners in the Cup Winners' Cup if the plans came in next season.

"I gained the definite impression that there is a good chance of these proposals going through," the FA's chief executive Graham Kelly said after the meeting. "But while there was a general wish among the clubs for more European competition for financial reasons, there was also a strong feeling that the extra clubs have to qualify on

England expects for 1996/97

Champions Cup
Premiership winners plus team with best league record over either five or 10 years. Manchester, United or Liverpool.

Cup Winners' Cup
FA Cup winners plus team with best league record over either five or 10 years. Arsenal, Tottenham or Liverpool.

Uefa Cup
Eight clubs chosen on merit from top eight countries in European rankings, including England but not Scotland.

merit, not power, and that national leagues need to be protected under any changes. It is a difficult balancing act.

Next season, English clubs already have two Uefa Cup places from the Premiership plus one from winning the Coca-Cola Cup. So the total European places available to English clubs could be 10 if the plans are introduced next season. But with extra places gained through Uefa Fair Play Awards and the Inter-Toto Cup, this could rise to 15 in 1997-98. Should any English club gain entry to one of the three cups as holders, the number of available places would take in more

than three-quarters of the Premiership.

The Premiership's chief executive Rick Parry did not think the extra games would entail the domestic programme being adjusted. "In terms of dates, we can certainly cope with the proposals that are currently being talked about," he said.

Kelly was less sure. "There is not the slack in the season at the moment," he said, "and I would have thought the clubs are going to be looking at the structure of the season. Whether they like it or not they're now being forced to consider a mid-season break."

A more radical proposal to turn the European Cup into a European League, presented by the Arsenal vice-chairman David Dein, will be investigated by Uefa but is thought to be too revolutionary for the ruling body at the moment.

Uefa also wants more international games played at weekends. The problems over Bosman were deferred until Monday, when the 12 countries present yesterday will meet again in London.



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Injury blow for England's Smith

ROBIN SMITH's World Cup may be over before it has started. The Hampshire and England batsman pulled a groin muscle while taking a brilliant catch towards the end of England's 62-run victory over a Lahore City XI yesterday, and such injuries can take weeks to heal.

"I felt it as I dived. That's when I must have pulled the muscle," said the 32-year-old Smith, who missed the climax of the 1992 World Cup in Australia after slipping a disc. "At this stage it feels very stiff and very sore. It's devastating for me."

A serious pull would discount Smith from the five-week tournament, which



Smith... devastated

England begin against New Zealand next Wednesday. "We should know more in a day or two," said England's manager Ray Illingworth. "But if the muscle has really gone then it's a three-week job and Robin is out of the competition."

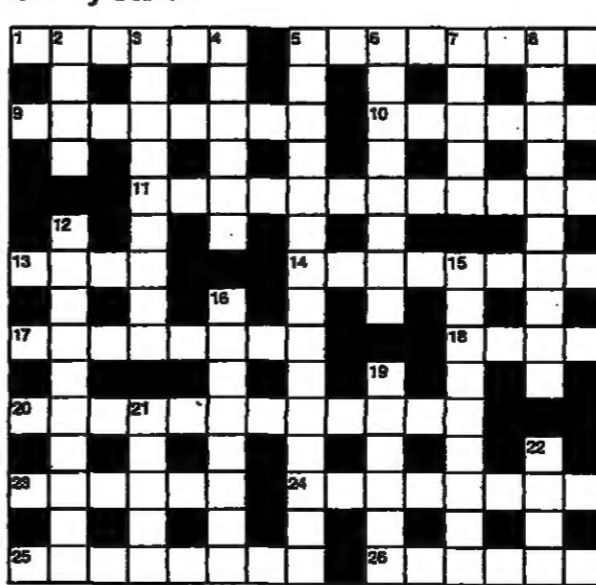
Mike Selvey, page 13

The world would be a better place if boys were to study the information in magazines in the way girls do. Where are the equivalent guides for young studs with raging hormones? Suzanne Moore

G2 page 7

Guardian Crossword No 20,570

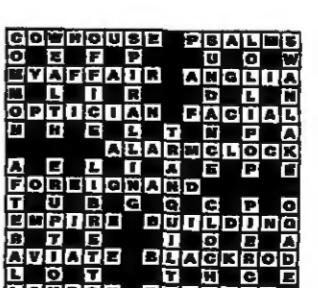
Set by Janus



Across
1 Steals small-beer (6)
3 Waste-carrier's arm leading the French astray (5,3)
9 Sugar made with rare ingredients (6)
10 Spectre — one appearing in violent anger (6)
11 A novice painting "Disorderly Male Picnic" (8,4)
13 Part of father's extravagant language (4)
14 Ruin when swimming off the late of Wright? (8)
17 Child needing diet with fish (6)
18 Insect flying over seaweed (4)
20 Nasty wives are disposed to speak out when last of money goes (3,4,5)
22 Specify right coin (5)

24 Standard applied to colleague as a rule (8)
25 Army a long time giving pledges (8)
26 Desert that lady? I should think so! (6)

Down
2 Period of faint sound (4)
3 Widespread before Levant disease (6)
4 Sticks to county employees (6)
5 Serious doubts about final destination perhaps (5,10)
6 Media intelligence giving points to players (6)
7 Warning of danger in universal arms-race (5)
8 Fashionable model having bad weather when exercising (2,8)
12 Opportunity I won't overlook in snip (5,2,3)



Crossword SOLUTION 20,570

15 Initial hang-up for most modern painting (4,5)
16 Number of fish picked up by large cat (5,3)
19 Cheque-holder or carrier (6)
21 Something of a strain for eight players? (5)
22 Unhappy sportsman (4)

Solution tomorrow

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